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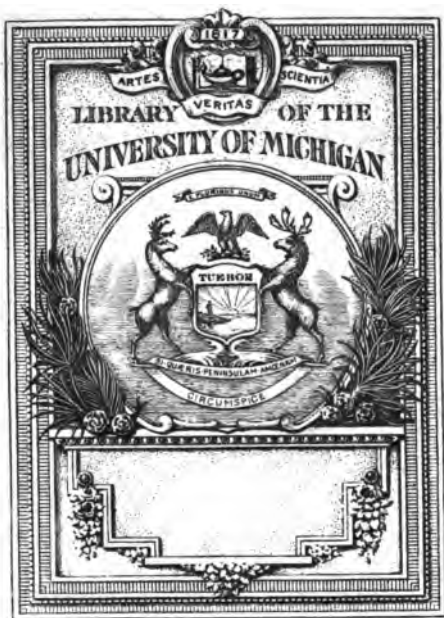
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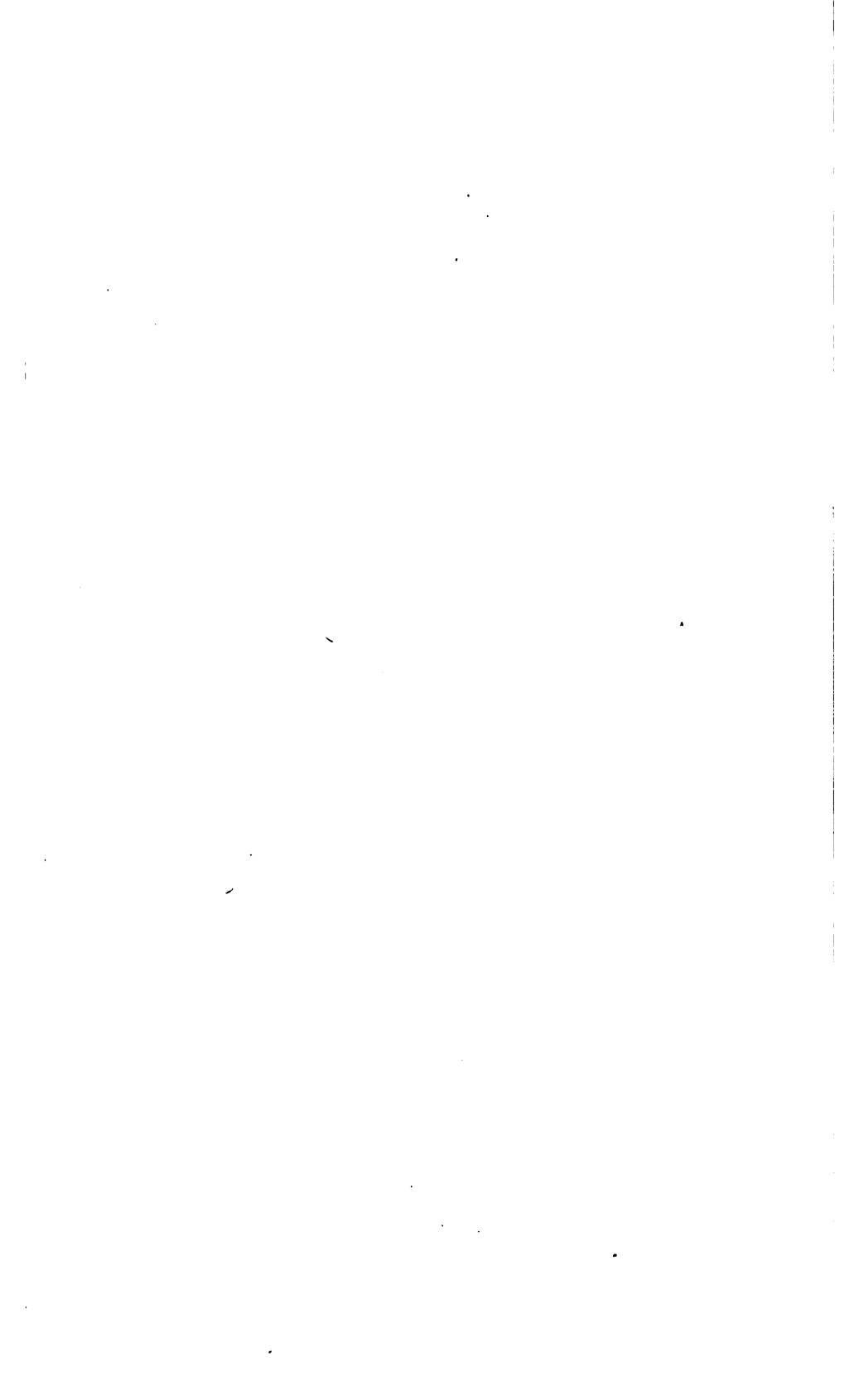
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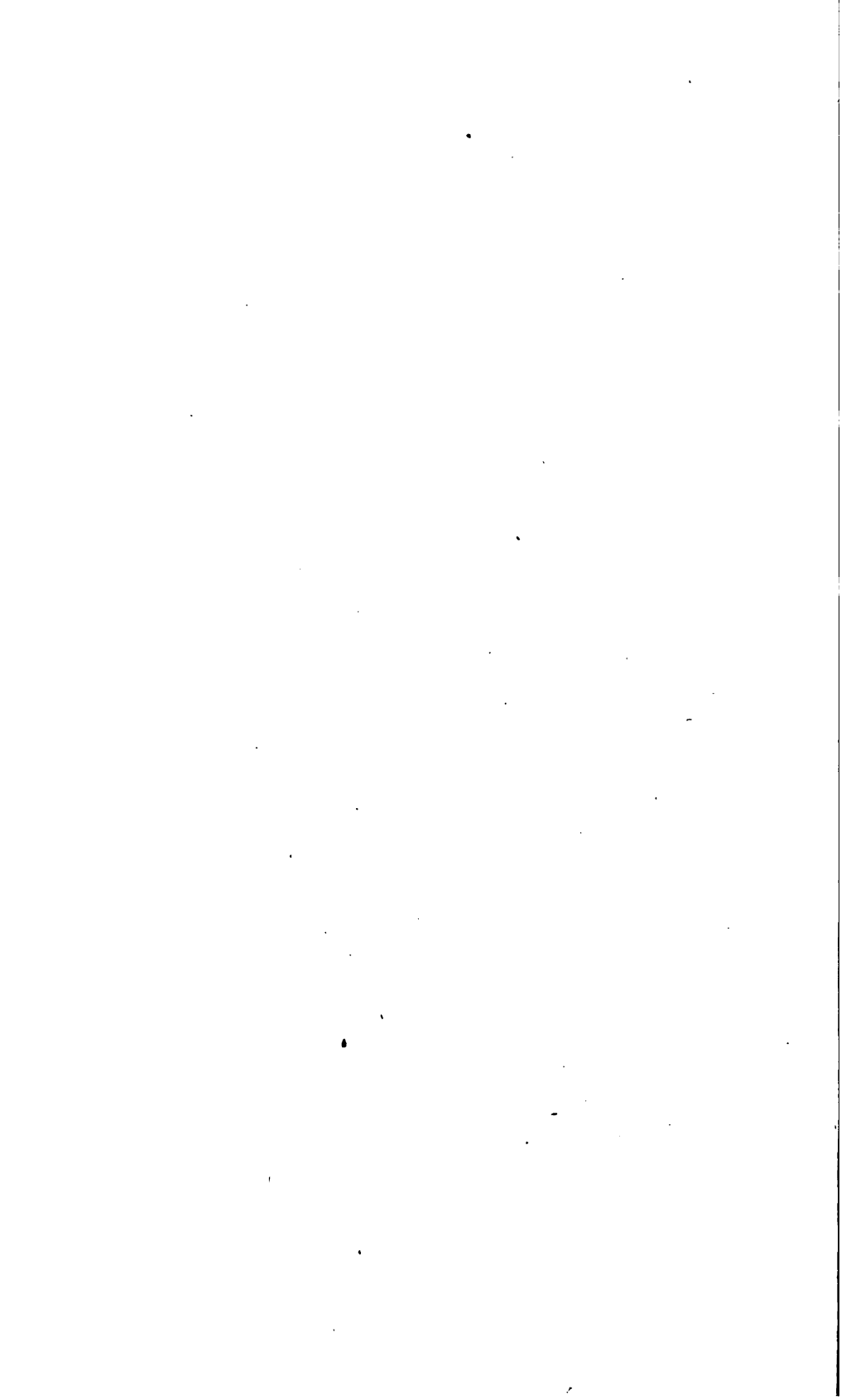
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THE
DIVINITY
OF
OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

DEMONSTRATIVELY PROVED

FROM SCRIPTURE, FROM TRADITION,
AND FROM SOME OF THE WRITINGS OF THE MOST EMINENT
CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT AUTHORS WHO HAVE
TREATED ON THIS SUBJECT;

IN TWENTY-SEVEN LETTERS,
WITH NOTES AND APPENDIX,

ADDRESSED TO

THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC;

AND DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION,

TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE DE BORDEAUX.

By M. D. TALBOT.

"Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall
find rest for your souls."—JER. vi. 16.

LONDON:

T. JONES, 63, PATERNOSTER ROW;
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STREET, MANCHESTER SQUARE; P. AND M. ANDREWS, DUKE STREET,
LITTLE BRITAIN; AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1843.

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TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE DUKE DE BORDEAUX.

SIR,

In supplicating the favour of dedicating to your Royal Highness, this tribute of faith, enlightened by reason, I obey the "*esprit de corps*," which unites all truth and intelligence, which revealing legitimacy in Heaven, displays it also on earth.

It is to the heir of the eldest son of the Church, to the descendant of sixty-nine most Christian Kings, that after God belongs this homage of the faith of a Christian Gentleman.

Bossuet, in one of his letters to one of my compatriots, Lord Perth, an illustrious defender of the faith, monarchical and religious, explains in three words, the path of honour and of virtue, "Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church, and the King." The Almighty reveals himself in these three names.

May your Royal Highness, in whom Europe admires the greatness of character, the fortitude, intelligence, and solid piety, which serves to revive the recollection of your august ancestor, Saint Louis,—deign to protect this feeble yet zealous work ; which, in proclaiming that there is no God but God, declares also that there is no King but the King.

DOMINE SALVUM FAC REGEM.

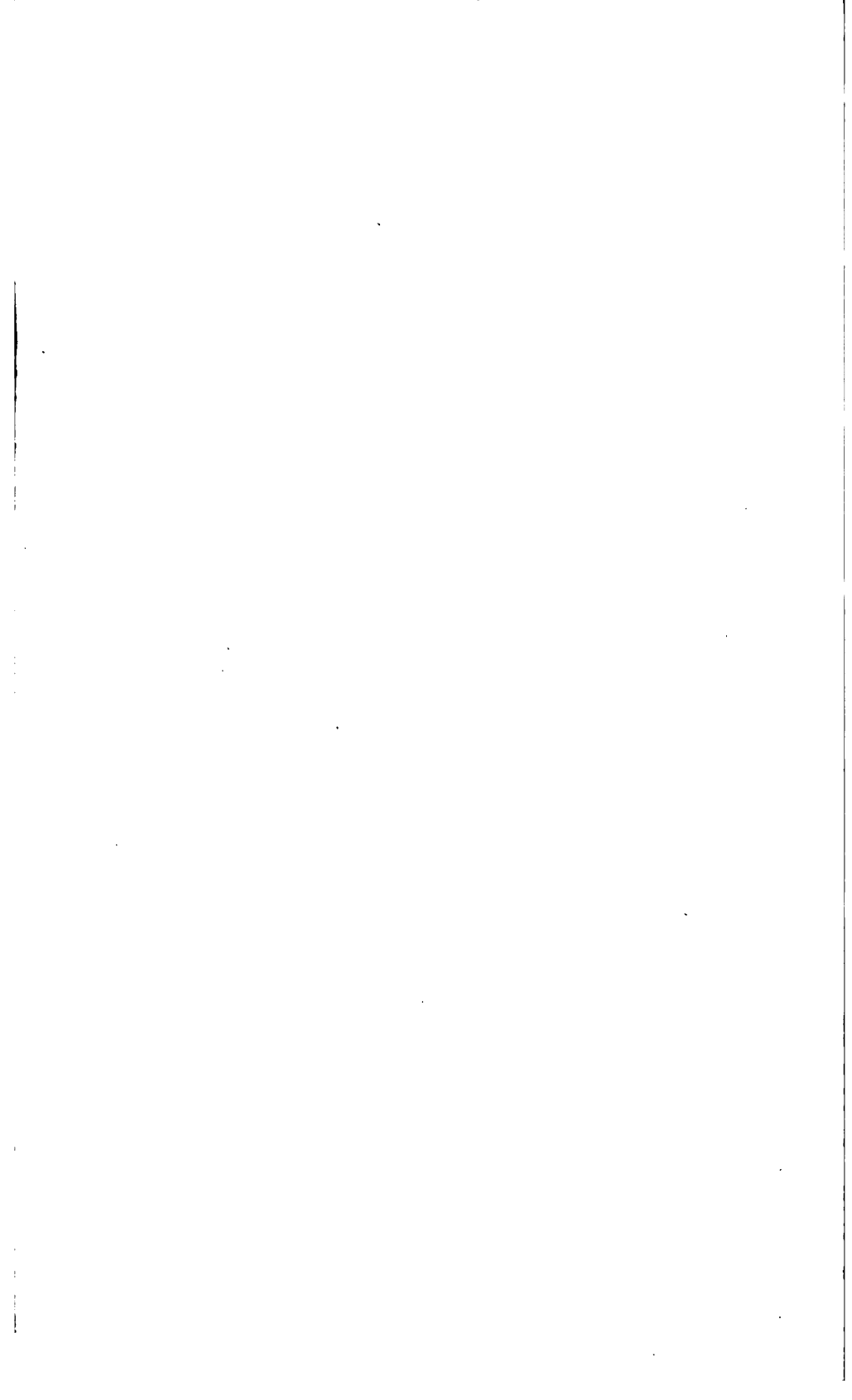
I am, Sir,

With the most profound respect,

Your Royal Highness's

Most devoted Servant,

M. D. TALBOT.



PREFACE. (a)

To all those who take this Book into their hands, I have only this short advice to give:—I beseech them to remember, that if the Divinity of Christ and Christianity be true, they are tremendous truths. All the great things this world can shew, are as nothing in comparison to them. Heaven and Hell are the issue. Its facts yet to come are as certain as those that are past. The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised—the heavens shall be on fire, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat—the angels shall gather the elect of God from the four winds—all men shall be called upon to give an account of their words and actions—and they who now deny the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and hold him in defiance, shall see the heavens and earth fly away before his face. A man must be stupified if he can think on these things without fleeing from the wrath to come: and there is no ordinary way to avoid eternal torments, but in the belief of Christ's Divinity and Christianity, which this Book teaches.

A most learned Catholic Divine, who has written a very able Work on the Divinity of our Saviour, truly says:—"I do not recollect to have met in all antiquity, with any document on the exalted mysteries of the Trinity, the Godhead of Jesus Christ, the Incarnation and union of his two Natures, that can be compared, either in loftiness of thought, conciseness

“of sentence, or copiousness and perspicuity of expression, “with the incomparable writings of St. Leo the Great on these “mysteries. They may most justly be styled masterpieces of “more divine than human eloquence. The Son of God “having chosen, as is the constant opinion of the Church, this “great man to vindicate and explain, in a most noble and “luminous manner, the divine œconomy of his exalted mysteries, of all sacred monuments, the following extracts from “his Works have been thought fittest and best adapted to “preface the sublime theme of the Godhead of Jesus Christ, “which I have undertaken to defend in this volume.” (*b*)

VII. SERMON OF ST. LEO THE GREAT, on the Solemnity of the Birth of Christ, commonly called Christmas, in which the holy Doctor explains the mystery of the two Natures in Christ:—

“He truly worships and piously celebrates the solemnity of this day, Dearly Beloved, who neither conceives of the Incarnation of the Lord anything that is erroneous, nor of the Deity anything that is unworthy of it. For it is an evil of equal danger, either to deny him the truth of our nature, or his equality with the glory of the Father. When, therefore, we set about to understand the mystery of the Birth of Christ, by which he was born of a Virgin Mother, let the darkness of human reasoning be driven far away, and let the smoke of earthly wisdom depart from the eye of enlightened faith. The authority on which we believe is divine—divine is the doctrine which we follow: for whether we give ear to the attestations of the old Law, or the oracles of the Prophets, or to the evan-

gelical trumpet, that which St. John, filled with the Holy Ghost, thundered out, is true,—‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him, and without him nothing was made.’ And what the same Preacher adds, is likewise true : —‘The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us ; and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.’ In both natures, therefore, is one and the same Son of God, who, whilst he assumes our nature, does not lose his own ; and who, whilst he renews man in man, perseveres unchangeable in himself. For the Godhead, which he possesses in common with the Father, suffered no disparagement of his omnipotence, nor did the form of a servant alter the form of God. For the supreme and everlasting essence, which has stooped down to the salvation of mankind, has indeed transferred us into his glory, but has not ceased to be what it was. Hence, when the only begotten of the Father acknowledged himself to be less than the Father, to whom also he declares himself to be equal, he shews the truth of both forms in himself ; in so much that the inequality in him shews his human, and the equality his divine nature. The corporeal birth, therefore, detracted nothing from the majesty of the Son of God, and added nothing to it, because an incomprehensible substance can neither be lessened nor increased. For, when we say, that the Word was made flesh, we do not mean to signify that the Divine nature has been changed into flesh, but that the flesh has been taken up into the unity of person, by which flesh, no doubt, the whole man is understood, with whom,

within the womb of a Virgin, which was made fruitful by the Holy Ghost, and which was never to be deprived of its Virginity, the Son of God is so inseparably united, that he, who was before all times begotten of the essence of the Father, is one and the same who is begotten in time from the womb of a virgin. For we could not possibly be loosened otherwise from the fetters of eternal death, unless he had debased himself in our nature, who remained omnipotent in his own."

* * * * *

Extract from the Epistle of St. Leo the Great to St. Flavian, Bishop of Constantinople, on the mystery of the Incarnation, against the impiety of Eutyches :—

"Leo, Bishop, to his most beloved brother, Flavian, Bishop of Constantinople.

* * * * *

"The Son of God, therefore, enters into this low world, coming down from his heavenly throne, but not departing from the glory of the Father, begotten after a new order, a new birth. After a new order, because being invisible in his own essence, he was made visible in our nature. He that cannot be contained, would be contained : he that existed before all times, began to exist in time. The Lord of the Universe, overshadowing the immensity of his Majesty, took the form of a servant. The impassible God did not disdain to be a passible man, and the immortal to be subject to the laws of death. But begotten by a new birth, because the undefiled virginity furnished, indeed, the matter for the body, but was an utter stranger to concupiscence. The nature,

therefore, was taken from the Mother of the Lord, but not the guilt ; neither is this nature in the Lord Jesus Christ, born of the womb of a Virgin, different from ours, because his birth is wonderful ; for he who is true God, the same is true man. And there is no fiction in this unity, since the lowness of man and the sublimity of the Godhead are united together ; for, as God is not altered by mercy, so man is not consumed by dignity ; for each form acts in communion with that other which is proper to it, that is to say, the Word works what belongs to the Word, and the flesh executes what belongs to the flesh. One of these natures flashes with miracles, whilst the other is smarting under injuries. And as the Word did not recede from an equality with the Father's glory, so neither did the flesh abandon the nature of our race. For one and the same is (what must be often said) truly the Son of God and truly the Son of Man : God, because 'in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God' ; Man, because 'the word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us' ;—God, because 'all things were made by him, and without him nothing was made' ; Man, because born of a woman, made under the law ; the birth of the flesh is the manifestation of the human nature ; the bringing forth of a Virgin is the indication of Divine power. The infancy of a little one is shown by the lowness of the cradle ; the greatness of the Most High is declared by the concert of Angels. He whom ungodly Herod seeks to kill, is like to other men as to his first beginnings, but he is the Lord of all, whom the wise men adore with joy on their knees. When he came to

the baptism of John, his precursor, in order that that which was covered under the veil of the flesh, may not be hidden, the voice of the Father, thundering forth from the heavens, said, 'This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' Whom, therefore, the craftiness of the devil tempted as man, to the same as to God the angels minister. To hunger, to thirst, to be fatigued, manifestly belong to human nature; but to feed five thousand men with five loaves of bread, to give to the Samaritan woman living water, the effect of which is to cause her who has drunk of it not to thirst any longer, to walk on the surface of the sea without sinking, and to awe the swelling of the waves in rebuking the tempest, is unquestionably Divine. As, therefore, (to pass over in silence many other instances,) it does not belong to the same nature, to weep from a feeling of commiseration over a departed friend, and to restore the same to life at the command of his voice after having been buried for full four days, or to hang on the cross, and, by turning the day into night, cause all the elements to tremble, or to be pierced with nails, and to open the gates of Paradise to the 'faith of the thief'; so likewise does it not belong to the same nature to say, 'I and the Father are one,' and to say, 'The Father is greater than I.' For although in the Lord Jesus Christ there is but one person of both God and man, another, however, is the nature from which contumely is common to both, and another, the nature from which glory is common to each. From our nature it comes that his humanity is less than the Father; from the Father he has it that his divinity is equal to the Father."

St. Irenæus says (*Lib. iii. adv. hæres. cap. vii.*), "Neither, therefore, the Lord, nor the Holy Ghost, nor the Apostles, would ever have called him (Jesus Christ) God, unless he were true God. Neither would they have called any one personally Lord, unless him who is Lord of all things, God the Father and his Son. As therefore the Father is truly Lord, and the Son is truly Lord, it is with reason that the Holy Ghost has designated them by the appellation of "Lord."

The whole book of Tertullian against Praxeas is nothing less than a professed vindication of the mystery of the Trinity, and of the distinction of the Three Divine Persons, as is most evident to any one who will give himself but the trouble to peruse this book. Tertullian, against Praxeas, says (c. viii.): "The Word, therefore, is always in the Father, as he himself says, I and the Father; and with God always, according to what is written, And the Word was with God; and at no time separated from the Father, for, I and the Father are one."

In fine, if Jesus Christ be simply man, he is an inexplicable enigma, for it is evident that he has spoken and acted as God. If Christ be God only, he is again an inexplicable enigma, for he has spoken and acted, obeyed and suffered as man. But if I suppose that Jesus Christ be God and man together, from that moment everything in him explains itself, every thing is adjusted, the apparent contradictions of his character are reconciled. I see that Jesus Christ might have said with truth, that his Father was greater than he, and that he was equal; that he was his God, and that he was the same God

with him. I see that Jesus Christ was all that he was to have been ; that he sustained, if I may so speak, the personage of God, and that of man, with all that dignity which became the one, and with all the humility which beseeemed that other. My reason approves him : he is such as I am persuaded he ought to be. It is thus, I conceive, that God should be man, and it is thus, I believe, that man should be God.

I beg my readers to ponder well on what I am now going to advance, viz. that Jesus Christ made a solemn and authentic declaration of his Divinity before the supreme court of the Jewish nation, therefore he is true God. St. Mark, xiv. 60, thus relates the juridical examination of Jesus Christ, before this supreme council of the Jewish nation, and the solemn declaration of Jesus Christ :—" And the High-priest rising up in the midst, asked him, and said to him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed God ? And Jesus said to him, I am. And you shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of the power of God, and coming with the clouds of heaven. Then the High-priest rending his garments saith, What need we of any farther witnesses ? You have heard the blasphemy, what think you ? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death." St. Matthew, xxvi. 63, in the following words :—" And the High-priest said to him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said to him, Thou hast said it. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the High-priest rent his garments, saying, He

has blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy, what think you? But they answering said, He is guilty of death." St. Luke relates this fact nearly in the same terms, xxii. 70, and following verses. See also St. John ix. 35—38; *Ibid.* xi. 4; *Ibid.* xii. 45, 46; *Ibid.* xiii. 8—13.

Whence I thus argue :—When the High-priest called upon Jesus Christ, in the name of God, to tell whether he was the Son of the living God, he meant to ask whether he were the true, natural, and consubstantial Son of God, and not whether he were only an adoptive Son of God, as all just men and angels are. This is manifest, first, from the object the High-priest had in view, which was to find in Jesus Christ a just ground of condemnation. Now they could no more consider it a crime in Christ to call himself an adoptive Son of God, than they considered it a crime for themselves to call God their Father and themselves his children, a title in which all the Jews gloried. Next, from the horror and indignation of the High-Priest and of the People at the answer of Christ, as at a horrid blasphemy, for they unanimously declared him to be guilty of death; all which would have been disgustingly ridiculous, had they not understood Christ's answer to imply that he was the true and natural Son of God; for there was not one upon those Benches, and in that multitude, who did not look on himself as the adoptive child of God. It is, therefore, undeniably true, that the question put to Christ on this solemn occasion, was about his natural, not his adoptive filiation or sonship. It is likewise unques-

tionably true, that Christ answered the question in the meaning which his judges had attached to it, and that he was understood in the same meaning by the council and all the people. Therefore, if, as Unitarians would fain have it, Christ was no more than man, it became his most sacred duty, on perceiving that his answer was taken in the wrong sense, to explain himself, and to undeceive the Council and People, by solemnly declaring, that he never meant to call himself the Son of God in any other way than they themselves did. Christ, I say, juridically interrogated by the higher authorities, was bound the supposition that he was not God, to give this clear and explicit declaration, chiefly for the following reasons : first—to hinder the Jews from committing the crime of murder, in the shedding of his innocent blood ; and secondly—to prevent all future generations from being innocently and irresistibly hurried into the heinous crime of Idolatry, by adoring him—a mere man—on that supposition, as God. Now did Christ give that declaration ? Did he explain his answer in the meaning of the Unitarians ? Did he undeceive the Jewish nation, when they took his answer as implying that he was the true and natural Son of God ? So far from doing this, he confirmed them in their impression, by threatening them with his second coming ; in which, he in his turn is to judge his own judges :—“ Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” In a word, Jesus Christ was juridically asked, whether he was the true, natural, and consubstantial Son of God. Jesus Christ answered—I am ;—his an-

swer is taken in that meaning by the judges, by the council, and by the assembled people. Christ, far from undeceiving them, confirms them in their impression ; therefore, Jesus Christ is either the true Son of God, or he has deceived mankind, and of course is an impostor : the latter is horrid blasphemy, the former then must be admitted. What could be, moreover, the meaning of the exclamation into which the Centurion broke out, at the consternation of all nature at the death of Christ,—“ Indeed this was the Son of God.”—(St. Matt. xxvii. 54.) Does he not seem to say, this man was condemned to death as a blasphemer, because he made himself the true Son of God. But now the universal mourning of nature, and the supreme power he exercises over the dead and the elements, sufficiently shew that he was more than man ; that he was actually that which he gave himself out to be ; “ that indeed he was the Son of God.” We read in the same history of the passion of Christ, that “ they passed by, blaspheming him, saying,—If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.” And again : “ For he said, I am the Son of God.” The people reproached Jesus Christ on the Cross, with the crime of having called himself the Son of God ; it was, therefore, notorious among the whole nation that he had called himself so, in the strict sense of the word—that is to say, the true, natural, and consubstantial Son of God ; for, otherwise, how could they have made it a crime in Christ to have called himself, in a general and improper sense, the Son of God, as they themselves, at every turn, did it, and as they reckoned the dignity of being children of God among their noblest prerogatives ? After this, may not all Christians ex-

claim with an ancient writer : " Lord, if what we believe be an error, it is thou thyself that hast deceived us !"—" Domine, si quod credimus, error est, a te decepti sumus."—(*Richardus a S. Victore, Lib. 2, de Trinit. cap. 2.*) (c)

NOTES TO THE PREFACE.

(a) By the word Tradition (in the title-page), I understand, not only the testimonies, which the Fathers of the Latin and Greek Church furnish us with in abundance on this subject, but likewise the decisions of the Councils of the Church.

(b) The Divinity of our Blessed Saviour has ever been the Doctrine of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, the " Ground and Pillar of Truth," as I demonstratively prove in this work. The true Church of Jesus Christ is the rule of our faith, and faith is immutable. It is not subject to change; therefore she required no Reformation. Heretics are those who (like the Arians, Socinians, and Unitarians) have separated themselves from the true Church of Christ on earth. Tertullian truly says: " Regula fidei omnino est, Sola immobilis, et irreformabilis."—(*De Virg.*)

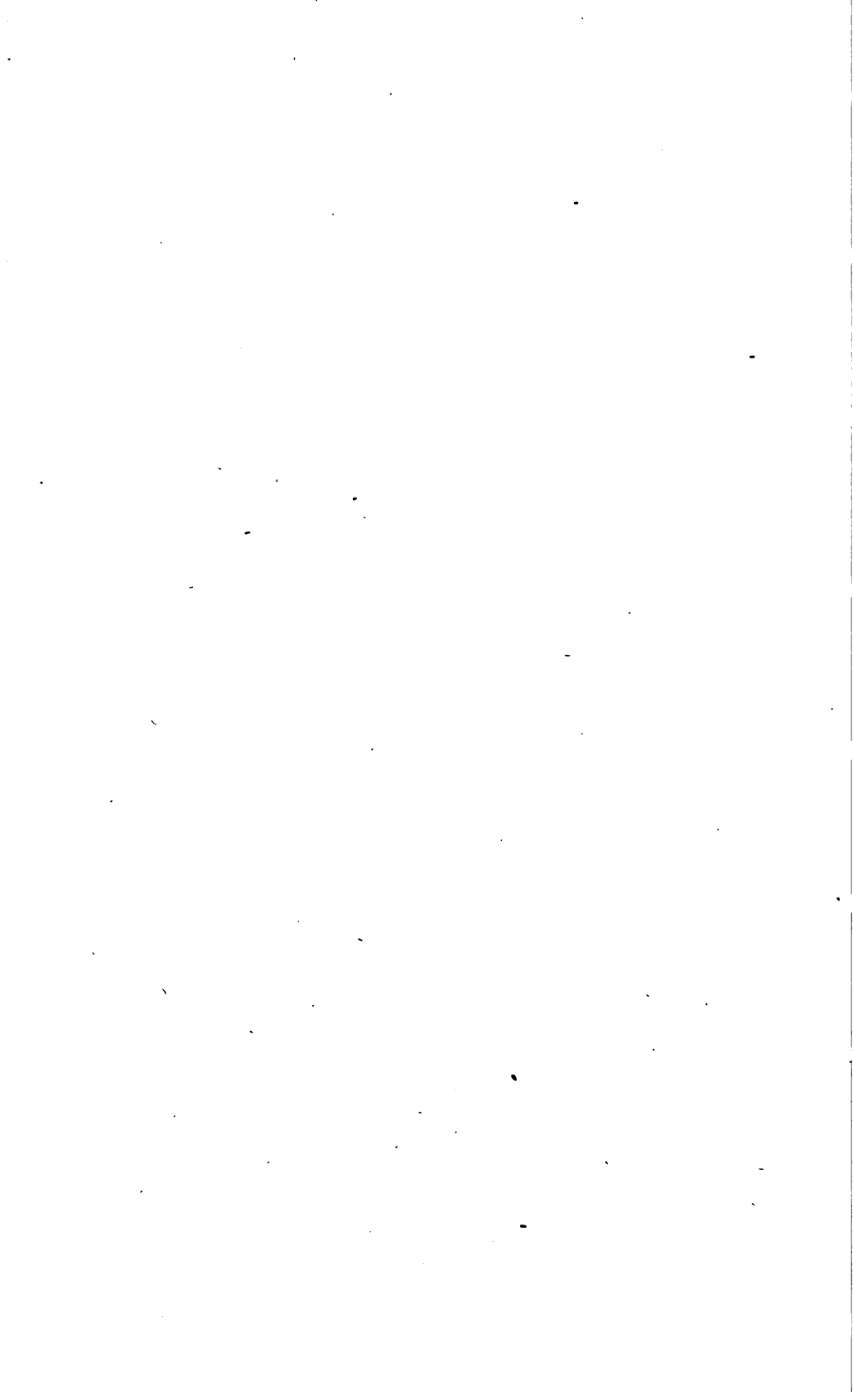
St. Vincent of Lerins says: " Who ever introduced a heresy, who had not previously separated himself from the common belief of the ancient and universal Catholic Church? This is more clear than day, by the examples which can be produced."—(*Lib. Contr. Hæreses. c. 34.*) And the Sacred Scripture even decides it: " Hi sunt qui segregant semet ipsos."—(*Judæ ix.*) Who are they who ought to be considered as heretics? Those who have separated themselves from the Church. If, then, the Roman Church has fallen into heresy, in changing the ancient doctrine, she must have separated herself from the true Church of Jesus Christ; because what constitutes a heretic, according to Scripture, is to depart from the Church. And if she separated herself from the true church, it is requisite for her adversaries to shew the time, by whom, and from what body she had separated herself? We know well that the Lutherans and Calvinists departed from her communion; that Luther was a monk, who had renounced his vows and his obedience to the Holy See, to gratify his pleasures and passions, and that Calvin (a man of infamous character) had erected a new church in France. No one can contradict these facts; and

their very disciples cannot disavow them. But you can no where find that the Church in communion with the See of Rome ever separated herself from the true mystical body of Jesus Christ, nor that she ever altered the dogmas of faith, which she had received from the Apostles, and diffused over the whole world, as says St. Paul.

The ancient writers, who have with so much care pointed out all the heresies which have sprung up in the Church, have never even given the smallest hint, that the Church in communion with the See of Rome ever separated herself from the true Church of Christ on earth, and which would be of the greatest possible consequence, had it been true. No one could, I assert, be found to impute these innovations to the Church in communion with the See of Rome, but the innovators themselves; and whom I can truly address in the words of Optat to the Donatists: "Invenistis Diaconos, Presbyteros, Episcopos; fecistis laicos; agnoscite vos animas evertisse."—(*Lib. 2.*)—"You accuse us of changing, you who have upset every thing. You have found Deacons, Priests, and Bishops, and have turned them into lay-persons. You have found Sacraments, and you have withdrawn the use of them. You have found altars consecrated to God, and you have profaned them. You have found unity in the sheepfold of Jesus Christ, and you have every where scattered divisions. Remember well, then, that the change comes from you, and that you have perverted souls." They, I proclaim, are the sworn enemies of God's true Church on earth, who have invented this foul calumny, and who have conspired together to destroy her; but that all the power of the Devil cannot effect, because the Great and Glorious God, the Lord and Creator of all things, has promised to be ever with his Church, leading and guiding her into all Truth.

And, moreover, it is certain, that the Holy Ghost dwells with none, who have not a sincere love and respect for the Church of Jesus Christ. St. Augustine says: "Quantum quisque amat ecclesiam, tantum habet spiritum sanctum."—(*St. Aug. tr. 33, in Joan.*)

(c) I have availed myself largely of Protestant Authorities in the course of this work, as the most Illustrious Personage, to whom this work is dedicated, must perceive. To avoid incumbering my sheets, as much as possible, with references, I shall content myself with this one ample acknowledgment of expressing how deeply I am indebted to the Catholic Divines, who have treated on this profound mystery. It will be readily seen, that these letters are written in a familiar and irregular manner; and are by no means intended as a Scholastic Treatise, which would require greater method and order.



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A VINDICATION
OF
THE DIVINITY
OF
OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

LETTER I.
TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

JESUS CHRIST, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but debased himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in fashion found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.—*Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.*

REV. SIR,

I should wish to speak on the Trinity and Divine Incarnation of Jesus Christ; but how can I explain what I do not comprehend? They are mysteries; and, as such, must be incomprehensible. Yet I can assent to them as incomprehensible truths,—as I assent to many others in nature. I believe, for instance, that matter was created; but how, I know not.—I believe that the corn grows from the seed; but how, I cannot tell. In the same manner, I can believe, that three distinct Divine Persons, in an identity of nature and essence consubstantial with each other,

constitute that Supreme Being we call God. Moreover, that the Second Person of this sacred Trinity, begotten by an eternal generation, assumed in time the nature of man, without detriment to his Divinity; yet the moment I attempt to comprehend and unfold the mysteries which are here involved, I advance beyond my depth, and am lost in infinity. The comparison used by a poor Indian to justify his belief in the Trinity, when accosted by an antichristian Philosopher, is worthy of the notice of many others who pretend to wisdom. The Philosopher asked him, how he could believe that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are each God, and yet admit but one God? "Why," replied the Indian, "what is rain?" "Water," said the other.—"And what is snow?" "Water."—"And what is ice?" "Water."—"Cannot I then believe in God what you admit in nature?"

The several passages of Scripture which are urged by the adversaries of the Trinity,—as, The Father is greater than I (John xiv. 28); At what day and hour no man knoweth, neither the Angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father (Mark xiii. 32—see note to Letter XI.),—are only perplexing to those who forget to distinguish between Jesus Christ as Man, and Jesus Christ as God.

Nothing is more calculated to strike with astonishment an observing and philosophic mind, than the difference of impression which the evidence of religion produces in the world. Was Christianity the religion of enthusiasts, did a mad fanaticism reign throughout, an explanation might easily be found in the varied conformation of the human mind. But since the reverse is obvious,—since learning, talents, and sound judgment, form the qualifications of the believer as well as unbeliever,—let a philosophic reason be given, why the educated Deist rejects the faith and religion of Jesus Christ, which the instructed Christian from prin-

ciple professes ; and why the one strenuously opposes a testimony which the other readily admits, and is ready to seal with his blood. It is of this question that I demand a philosophical elucidation, or a satisfactory reason why there should exist such a contradictory result. Will it be said, that our minds are differently constituted and endowed ?—the case supposes them to be equally enriched by nature and art. Will it be said that either one or the other has acted without a motive, and against his judgment ?—both profess to be directed by the best of motives, that of reason and conviction.

Here, therefore, is a difficulty which I believe I may defy philosophy to explain. Let religion, then, solve what philosophy cannot ;—let her for once be heard in her own cause. It is in the passions and vices of our species that we shall discover the reason ;—it is they which, by first influencing the will, corrupt the understanding. Religion is readily embraced by those who have freedom of election ; but when the passions domineer, the human mind is degraded to a state of slavery, and instead of acting from a pure and noble principle, becomes the most abject and servile flatterer. They admit no other independence in the person, than such as does not interfere with that dominion which they have acquired—a sentiment continually urged by the Fathers : “ A corrupted heart,” says the great St. Augustine, “ may see the truth, but can never like it, or find it amiable.” It is to no purpose that you enlighten and instruct yourselves, if your doubts are in your passions. Religion will be clear, when you shall become chaste, temperate, and just ; and you will have faith, when you shall cease to have vice. Religion, Rev. Sir, is not the fruit of contentions and disputes,—not of learning, and an ostentatious display of argument ; but in innocence, prayer, and an humble confidence in God. And the world shall be judged, that is,

condemned, said Jesus Christ; because the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness, rather than the light; for their works were evil. For every one that doth evil, hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reprov'd. But he that doth truth, cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they are done in God (John iii. 19, 20, 21).

It is but in justice, therefore, to truth and religion, that in distinguishing these characters, we mark those who are thus morally disqualified from receiving the doctrine which the Church teaches. The point I intend in these letters to enforce, Rev. Sir, is the Divinity of that same Jesus Christ who suffered for the world. The proofs I shall adduce will be clear, positive, and wholly sufficient for those who possess a virtuous heart, and uncorrupted mind. But for the conviction of the vicious, for the satisfaction of the proud, I plainly declare, they will not suffice. On them alone we can expect to make no impression: we may confound, but we shall never convert them.—We may detect all their sophisms, and leave them without an answer; but shall never induce them to confess, that the crucified Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. The Jews ask for signs, says the Apostle, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews, and a folly to the Gentiles (1 Cor. i. 22).

The philosophers of modern, like those of ancient date, recoil from a religion which confounds their wisdom, humbles their pride, and restrains those passions they are so eager to indulge. Interested in the opposition they make, they decry Christianity, because they know Christianity has condemned them:—they reject the Scriptures, because in every page they read the sentence pronounced against them:—they ridicule the cross of Christ as a folly, because it is the sign of their eternal reprobation. Name me the

instructed individual, who professes to deny the divine character of Jesus Christ, and is an humble, chaste, and virtuous man, whose soul has never been defiled by vice, and I will go to the end of the earth, to behold that miracle, that prodigy of nature. Shall we say it of a Bolingbroke, a Hume, or the other deistical writers of our own country? Shall we say it of a Socinus, and a Voltaire, and the antagonists of Christianity on the continent? Have any of them been spoken of as men of virtue? Have they not been, for the most part, infamous for their lives, and the apologists for vice?

Indeed, Rev. Sir, it is often difficult for us to uncover the secret corruption of a private life: it often happens that a vicious heart remains concealed from public notice. "The only thing for us," wrote Voltaire, "is to declare ourselves better Christians than those who accuse us of not being Christians."—(*Letter lxxxi. to d'Alembert.*) But in the last scene of their career, their real character is fully displayed, and at the approach of death we are mostly able to form a true judgment of these deists. While the confidence of the fervent Christian becomes strengthened as he draws near to his end, the boldness of the infidel abandons him,—his mind is agitated, black despair is seated in his countenance, and Judas like, he employs, if he can, his own violent hand to terminate his existence. Such were the continual terrors which haunted the minds of Mr. Hobbs and Mr. Thomas Paine, that for many years before their deaths, they would never allow themselves to be left alone either night or day.

Such is the solution of the problem of infidelity,—such is the death of the Deist; and it is alone to the wide diffusion of the principles of Deism, that we may ascribe the swelling list of suicides, which almost daily disgrace every walk of life.

In proving to you, Rev. Sir, the Divinity of Jesus Christ, I shall not pretend to go deep into the mystery, or attempt to explain it in a manner that might satisfy the eager curiosity of your reason,—the task would be too much even for an angel, and I might as soon attempt to tell you what is God. I shall, therefore, simply lay before you, Rev. Sir, the proofs of his human and divine natures, and having established both, leave it for your faith to assent to the mysterious union, though your understanding be unequal to comprehend it. The argument will be the same, that proves the presence and union of body and soul in man. I observe in him, for instance, the operations of a body ; he respire, eats, speaks and moves : I also observe in him, the operations of a spiritual soul ; he thinks, reasons, and remembers:—therefore, I conclude without doubt, *that he has a body and soul united in the same person, since they never act but together*, though I am at a loss to understand how this union is effected. And this argument will clearly expose the folly of those who oppose the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Jesus Christ, on the mighty reason that they cannot conceive the mystery. As well may they come forward and tell us we are men without souls, because they cannot conceive how matter and spirit should ever be united. And thanks to our infidel writers, I suppose it was in this profundity of wisdom, that one of the most eminent statesmen (Mr. Charles Fox) this country ever produced, on his death-bed, was led to ask his intimate friend, if he really believed man had a soul. I confess to thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that if these things are concealed from the wise and prudent, thou hast revealed them to little ones (Luke x. 21).

But before I proceed, I conceive myself justified in putting two simple questions to you, which are, whether

you will admit the testimony of men, as authority sufficient for believing facts,—and whether any particular exception is to be made to the prejudice of this evidence, when facts become proofs of Christianity? If, in the language of Mr. Hume, you answer me, that the testimony of men furnishes no certitude whatever, then, I think, it will be prudent for me at once to throw off the character of a christian, and for you to commit your libraries to the flames, since your answer tends to dissolve society itself, and to remit you to a state of savage barbarism, more savage than that in which any nation of the earth is found. If, on the other hand, you tell me, that credit is alone to be refused to their testimony, when they attempt to establish a supernatural fact, because such is inadmissible by its very nature, I must reply, that though this be completely begging the question, yet supposing the existence of God, I conceive men as qualified to give testimony of a supernatural fact, as of one that is strictly natural;—and consequently as there is an equal motive for assenting to each, to each is due an equal credit. Thus, Rev. Sir, if the indefective testimony of men be sufficient to certify the existence and the death of Lazarus, the same indefective testimony is equally able to certify, that this identical Lazarus was miraculously raised from the dead by a Prophet of God, after he had lain corrupted four days in his tomb:—and if human evidence can certify to me, that the man Jesus Christ was crucified and buried, this same evidence can also certify to me, that he afterwards ascended into heaven, in the presence of many, asserting himself to be the Saviour of the world, and the Son of God. I will observe then, on the whole evidence which relates to the person of Jesus Christ, that never was testimony more complete and satisfactory, never more positive, never more consonant, than that which is given by the Prophets and

Evangelists, by history, and the events which come immediately under our own observation. Infidels say, that the facts, proofs, and events, which are employed to establish Christianity, are the mere effect of chance, and might have existed independently of the christian scheme of redemption. —In the same manner, materialists say, that the universe, and that noble being Man, might have been the result of a fortuitous meeting of atoms, which, by some secret chemical process, settled in the present order of things, much in the same way as the nightly dews are condensed upon our windows in a frosty temperature of the atmosphere. But though it be possible that some irregular substances, such as a block of marble, might be formed after this mode, can any one conceive it possible, that the whole universe, with all the animal creation, could have been thus brought into existence? Oh Philosophy! where is thy wisdom? In the same manner, though the facts, proofs, and events, which speak for the revealed system of redemption, be individually susceptible of a different interpretation from that which is at present given them by Christians, yet, when we observe how they all bear upon and help to establish the same object, it is equally inconceivable how an infidel can be found to maintain that such a combination of circumstances could have been any thing but Divine ordination.

The conclusion, therefore, is, that if ever we are to admit human testimony at all, we must in preference receive it here; and that, if we reject the facts which it has recorded, there are none on which we can consistently rely.

As my object, on this occasion, is principally to establish the Divine character of Jesus Christ, it will be sufficient for me, in proving his human nature, to observe, that as he distinctly declared himself the Son of Man,—as he exhibited all the operations of a human body and soul,—

as he grew up from infancy, lived and died like the other children of Adam,—it must be concluded that Jesus Christ was truly man, having a body and soul like one of us. It will be unnecessary, then, for me to dwell any longer on this point, since his sacred divinity is now the object of our attention, in proving which, I shall simply employ the evidence of Scripture, and the evidence of his miracles. Independently of those transcendent qualifications and sublime endowments, which the sacred Scriptures throughout attribute to this Son of David, there are some passages which deserve a more particular notice, since they positively and formally attest the Divinity of the Messiah.

In the first place, then, I wish you, Rev. Sir, to observe, that the term Jehovah is a Hebrew word, never used but to express the great God, Creator of heaven and earth.—Jehovah, says the Prophet Jeremiah, Is The True God, He Is The Living God, And An Everlasting Being (Jer. x. 10), And David exclaims: Thou whose name Alone Is Jehovah. Art The Most High Over All The Earth. And though in our modern languages we are forced to substitute a less determinate expression, such as Lord, yet it must always bear the precise sense of the original, Jehovah, which both Jews and Christians acknowledge to be incommunicable to any being but the Eternal God. And so great is the Jewish respect for this word, that they will not even suffer their lips to pronounce it, but whenever it occurs in reading they use the expression Adonai in its place. Now, Rev. Sir, if we can shew that the Messiah who was promised to the Jews, was often styled by the Prophets Jehovah, we shall prove that the Messiah was pointed out by the Prophets as a divine person, the Lord God of heaven and earth. In the prophecy of Jeremiah, we read (Jer. xxiii. 5): Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will rise up to David a righteous branch; and a King shall reign and shall

be wise, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In these days Juda shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell confidently; and this is the name which they shall call him, JEHOVAH, OUR JUST ONE.

In the prophecy of Zacharias (Zach. ii. 10) we also read: Sing praise, and rejoice, Oh daughter of Sion: for lo, I come, and will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah. And many nations shall be joined to Jehovah in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto thee.

In the book of the Prophet Hosea (Osee i. 6), Jehovah speaks and says: I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel, but I will utterly forget them. And I will have mercy upon the house of Juda, and will save them by Jehovah their God.

Again, in the prophecy of Zacharias (Zach. x. 12): I will strengthen them in Jehovah, and they shall walk in his name, saith Jehovah.

Now, Rev. Sir, compare these passages with the two following, which I shall extract from the Prophet Isaiah (Isa. ix. 6): A child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace.

The same prophet writes: Thus saith Jehovah: Men of stature shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine; they shall walk after thee, in chains they shall come over; and they shall worship thee, they shall make supplication unto thee; only in thee is God, and there is no God beside thee. Verily, thou art a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Saviour.

The same is also signified by the Royal Psalmist, when adverting to the Messiah: His everlasting kingdom—his

eternal throne—his generation before the day-star—his seat at the right hand of God—his adoration by all nations and angels—are expressions which can never be applied to any but a divine person, and that this person is also clothed in human nature, is evident from the context.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERAX.

POSTSCRIPT.

I quite differ from you in the explanation which you give to the word Elohim, and refer you at once to the great R. Bechai, a celebrated author among the Jews; discoursing on the word Elohim, and of the importance and the signification of it, adds these words: "According to the cabalistical way, this name, Elohim, is two words, namely, El him, that is, they are God. But the explanation of the Jod is to be taken from Eccles. xii. 1: 'Remember thy Creators. He that is prudent will understand it.' These words do sufficiently prove the cabala among the Jews, that though the Divine Nature was but one, yet there was some kind of Plurality in this Divine Nature; and this is fairly insinuated in the Bera Elohim, which we find in the beginning of Genesis."—(*Kidder's Demonstration*, part. 3, p. 31.) R. Huna is introduced in a Jewish work as saying, that if this kind of language had not been written, it would not have been lawful to say, The Elohim hath created, &c. (*Martini Pugio Fidei*, p. 488.) Likewise the Jewish Rabbi Limborch, tells us, that in the word Elohim there are three degrees, each distinct by itself, yet all one, joined in one, and not divided from one another (*Leslie's Short Method with the Deists and Jews*). It is likewise clear, how sensible the

Jews have been, that there is a notion of plurality imputed in the Hebrew Text, since they have forbidden their common people the reading of the history of the creation, lest understanding it literally, it should lead them into heresy. The degrees in the Divine nature are called by the cabalistic Doctors, Panim, or Faces; the Havioh, or Subsistences; and the Prosopin, or Persons. It may be observed here likewise, that the Hebrew Doctors always supposed the first verse of Genesis to contain some latent mystery. The Rabbi Ibba indeed expressly says it does, and adds, this mystery is not to be revealed till the coming of the Messiah. It is likewise worth observing, that the ancient Jews, not wishing to use the singular name Jehovah, have substituted for it Adonai, a noun in the plural signifying My Lords (*See Maurice's Indian Antiquities, vol. 4, p. 473, 474*).

"In the Beginning God created," is, by the Jerusalem Targum rendered, "By his Wisdom God created." This is in conformity with the Words of Solomon, where he says, The Lord by Wisdom hath founded the Earth, by understanding hath he established the Heavens (Prov. iii. 19). The Book of Wisdom likewise says: Give me Wisdom that sitteth by thy Throne (Chap. ix. 4); and in the 17th verse of the same chapter, the author of that book says again: Thy council who hath known, except thou give Wisdom and send thy Holy Spirit from above." This is agreeable to the notions of the ancient Jews, who usually called the second number in the Divine essence Wisdom, and the third Understanding. The Father has ever with him his Word and Wisdom, says Irenæus, his Son and Spirit, by whom and in whom he made all things freely (*Lib. 4, c. 20*). And in another place, the Word and Wisdom, the Son and Spirit, are called the Hands of God, by which he made the world. (*See the same Book and chapter.*)

Is it not extraordinary that Moses, the man of God, who above all things was most careful to guard his people against every species of Idolatry, should in the very beginning of, and all the way through his Law, make use of a word for the name of God which led them to think of a plurality, when the language afforded other words in the singular number that would have answered his purpose equally well? what might be his reason? upon the supposition of a plurality of persons in the Divine nature is easily accounted for; but not, I think, in a satisfactory manner (*See Maurice's History of Indostan, vol. 1, p. 72*) upon any other. And it appears from several of the Jewish writings which are not contained in the Bible, that they did actually understand the hints interspersed in the Books of Moses, as conveying the idea of a plurality of persons in the Supreme Being. If it be inquired of what persons this plurality consists? Two are most evidently mentioned in the context, viz., the Father and the Holy Spirit. And the work of creation is frequently in the New Testament ascribed to Jesus Christ. Therefore here are Three Persons, namely, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, most evidently concerned in the original creation of the World. And when Moses made use of a plural noun for the name of God, which he does thirty times in the short history of the creation, and perhaps five hundred times more in one form or other in the five Books of his Writings, this, I apprehend, was the idea he intended to convey to mankind, he meant, or rather the Holy Spirit by whom he was inspired to write his history, meant to give some hints and intimations of a doctrine more clearly to be revealed in future ages.

John Xeres, a Jew, converted in England some years ago, published a sensible and an affectionate address to his unbelieving brethren, wherein he says, that the word Elhoim,

which is rendered in Gen. i. 1, is of the plural number, though annexed to a verb of the singular number; which, says he, demonstrates as evidently as may be, that there are several persons partaking of the same divine nature and essence.—(*Jones on the Trinity*, c. 3, sec. 1.)

St. Irenæus is exactly of the same opinion. “The Father,” says he, “made all things visible and invisible, not by angels, nor by any powers separated from his own mind; for the God of all stands in need of nothing; but by his own Word and Spirit, makes, governs, and gives being to all things.”—(*Lib. 1, c. 22, sec. 2.*)

The Triangle of Egypt was of old considered as a just Symbol of the Three-fold Deity; and in the celebrated Jewish book called Zohar, the three branches of the Hebrew letter Schin, are asserted to be a proper emblem of the Three Persons that compose the Divine essence. Sometimes the Jews have called these Persons, Three Spirits; at other times, Three Powers; and at other times, Three Lights. It may be observed, moreover, that the Jews had several other symbolical representations of the Trinity, besides the Hebrew word, Schin. There was the Three Jods and the Chamets in a circle; the Three Rays in form of a Crown; the Sphere with Three Hands; the Cherubim, and many others.—(*See Maurice's Indian Antiquities*, vol. 4.)

When God had nearly gone through the six days' creation, and was come to the formation of the human species, he changes his manner of speaking, and says, not “Let man be,” as before; nor “I will make man”; but, “Let us make man, in our Image, after our Likeness.”

The Jews tell us, that when Moses was writing the six days' work, and came to this verse, he made a stop, and said, “Lord of the world, why wilt thou give an occasion to heretics to open their mouths against the Truth?” They

add also, that God replied to Moses, "Write on ; he that will err, let him err."—(*Bereshit Rabba, Parash. 8. See also Patrick on same place, and Maimonides More Nevochim, part. 2, c. 29.*) This fabulous story was invented on purpose by the Jews to defend themselves against the Christians, who from the beginning contended for a plurality in the God-head, founded on this text.

LETTER II.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

REV. SIR,

Having laid before you this evidence of the Prophets, we will now proceed to the Evangelists. It is well known that the Apostle St. John sat down to write the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the express purpose of proving his divinity. He thus sublimely opens: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us (and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

As you will observe, I make no comments on these texts, which speak for themselves to an humble and an honest mind. For the proud, the impious, and the unchaste, I fear they will not suffice. There are many

other passages in the New Testament which clearly indicate the divinity of Jesus Christ hidden under the form of Man. In St. Matthew we read that Jesus Christ put this question to his Apostles (Matt. xvi. 13): Whom do men say that the Son of Man is? But they said: Some John the Baptist, and others Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them: But whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven.

The same is also evident from the whole of the fifth chapter of St. John, wherein Jesus Christ labours to shew the Jews, how in his nature he is identified with God the Father (John v. 19): Amen I say unto you, the Son cannot do anything himself but what he sees the Father doing. For what things soever he doth, these the son also doth in like manner. And in the tenth chapter of the same Evangelist, we observe the repetition of this declaration, as also the sense in which the Jews understood his words (Ib. 30): I and the Father are one, said he. The Jews then took up stones to stone him. Jesus answered them: Many good works I have shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do you stone me? The Jews answered him: For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a Man, makest thyself God. Besides, upon what other charge did the Jews ground the sentence of his condemnation to the cross? (Matt. xxvi. 63; Mark xv. 2; Luke xxii. 70; John xix. 9.) His expiring with a supernatural effort produced this testimony from the mouth of a Pagan: This Man indeed was the Son of God. (Mark xv. 39.)

I have already adduced the testimony of St. Paul, whose

Epistle to the Philippians was written many years before St. John composed his Gospel, and consequently is evidence of the early faith of the Church on this matter. I shall now, Rev. Sir, close this great body of scriptural proof by one text of this same Apostle from his Epistle to the Romans (Rom. ix. 5): From our Father, he writes, cometh Jesus Christ according to the flesh, who is God over all, blessed for ever.

I have before noticed to you, that the Jews objected as blasphemy to Jesus Christ, his styling himself God; which objection he immediately met, by shewing them how to distinguish between him who was not, and him who proved himself to be a blasphemmer. Is it not, said he (John x. 34; see also xiv. 9), written in your law, I said you are gods? If he called them gods to whom the word of God was spoken, and the Scripture cannot be broken, do you say of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the works; that you may know that the Father is in me, and I in the Father. It is the miracles which Jesus Christ wrought which stand in attestation of the truth of these declarations, and which secure the mind of the Christian against the very shadow of a doubt. They are so essentially important, Rev. Sir, that in ordering our faith they should never be disjoined; they are the two terms whose sum, in a moral light, absolutely involves the divinity of Jesus Christ. Like the premises of syllogistic argument, you may object to either member, but if you concede them, the comprehending consequence cannot be withheld without a solecism in reasoning. For you must clearly perceive, that although man may most positively assert, it is only God who can confirm by a miracle (John ix. 31, 32); and therefore to sup-

pose that the Deity would work a miracle to establish a lie, nay to sanction a blasphemy, is an idea which surely can never enter a sound understanding.

It cannot be necessary for me here to go far into the account of the miracles of Jesus Christ, which are detailed in the Gospels. The Evangelists inform us, that it was to them he continually appealed, in arguing with the Jews, and in instructing the Apostles; they were works which no man had ever done, and they clearly proved him to be the accomplishment of the divine promise to Moses * (Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19; John v. 46): I will raise them up a prophet out of the midst of their brethren like to thee.

Rev. Sir, I will here beg you to observe, that the miracles of Jesus were wrought in the presence of an infinite number of persons; that they took place in the great city of Jerusalem, or in its immediate neighbourhood; that Herod himself had heard of his fame, and was desirous of seeing him work a miracle; and that they are recorded by profane historians as well as by those we consider sacred. Porphyrius, a pagan, writes (*L. de Laud. Phil.*): "It is exceeding wonderful what testimony the gods do give of the singular piety and sanctity of Jesus; for which they avouch him rewarded with immortality." And the famous Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, who witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem, thus speaks of him, whilst describing those events which preceded that disaster of his country (*Ant. lib. 18, c. 7*): "There was at that time one Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, a worker of most wonderful miracles, and a master and teacher of all such men as willingly were content to embrace the truth." This passage has been contested by critics,—but either Josephus mentioned our Saviour in his history or he did not. If he did, let any one produce a different passage from the one in

* Applied to Acts iii. 22.

dispute. If he did not, such an affected silence about events which had been so much divulged, and had occasioned so much conversation in the world, is more expressive than a volume. (*See Appendix.*) He speaks about John the Baptist and St. James, and why forget their Master? "It was believed among the Jews," he says, "that the army of Herod was destroyed by the just vengeance of heaven, on account of John, who was surnamed the Baptist. For the Tetrarch put him to death, though he was a most good man, employed in exhorting the Jews to virtue, and in particular to piety and justice, as also to the purification of baptism."—(*Joseph. lib. 18, Ant. c. 7.*) If John was a good man, our Saviour must have been the Messiah; since he called himself his precursor. If Jesus was not God-man, St. John must have been an impostor, &c. &c.—Behold The Lamb Of God, &c. Pliny also attests what the primitive Christians thought on this head. In his 102nd Letter to the Emperor Trajan, he writes, "That on certain days they were accustomed to meet before it was light, and by turns, to sing psalms to Christ, as to God."—(*Lib. 10.*)

The miracles of Christ, to which I would particularly direct your attention, Rev. Sir, are the raising of Lazarus from death to life after he had been buried four days (John 11), also the daughter of the ruler of the Synagogue (Matt. 9), and the widow's son at the gate of the city of Nain (Luke 7). Moreover, the curing of the cripple at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem (John v.), as also the man sick of the palsy (Mark 9), and the feeding of five thousand with five loaves and two fishes (Matt. 14). It was these miracles which stirred up the jealousy of the Jewish priests against Jesus Christ, and determined them in their malice to destroy him. I might also lay a special stress on the great miracle of his own resurrection, attested by his guards

and so many others (Matt. 27); but, Rev. Sir, the miracle which in my idea is the most striking to us, because always standing and immediately under our own observation, is the completion of his command to twelve poor men, Go And Teach All Nations; and the subsequent spread of Christianity to every corner of the earth. Never had a King in this world so extensive and illustrious a dominion as Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. Never was any standard triumphantly carried through so many nations as the standard of his cross. We Preach Christ Crucified. What moreover will infidel Philosophers say to that widely diffused opinion of an universal conqueror springing from Judea, at a time when the whole world was subject to the Roman power, and not a sword could be drawn in Asia, Africa, or Europe, without the permission of Cæsar. Suetonius writes: "An ancient and constant tradition had spread over all the East, that by a decree of the fates, men coming from Judea should conquer the world."*

Step forth, then, ye miserable philosophers,—come forth ye infidels,—behold the strong proofs on which the divinity of Jesus Christ is grounded. Talk not of your repugnance to miracles,—talk not of difficulties in submitting to the Christian faith,—if, after all, Jesus Christ were, as you say, a mere man, and no God, I maintain this would be a greater miracle than any I have stated; and far more difficult for the understanding to admit, than the most sublime mystery of the Christian religion.

(The argument of St. Augustine for the divinity of Christ,

* "Pluribus persuasio in erat, antiquis sacerdotum libris contineri eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur."

† Tacitus writes,—"It was believed by many, that it had been declared in some ancient writings of Priests, that at that time, the East should become powerful, and that men from Judea should make themselves masters of the world."—

against the Arian Bishop Maximin, is unanswerable.—“Clamour,” he says, “as much as you please, about the Father being greater, the Son less ;—the answer will be,—but the greater and lesser are two. Yet it is not said, the Lord thy God the greater, is one Lord ; but it is said, the Lord thy God is one Lord. Neither is it said, there is no other equal to me ; but, there is no other but me. Either, therefore, confess that the Father and Son are one Lord God, or openly deny that the Lord God is Christ.”—(Chap. 23, p. 727, tom. 8. *Edit. Ben.*)

The very possibility, then, I must deny, for it would completely unhinge every moral principle in man, dissolve every notion we entertain of the goodness, justice, and wisdom of God, and necessarily introduce that system of atheism, which we know to be the child of antichristian infidelity. (*Spirit of Controversy*, p. 193.)

Oh then, Rev. Sir, Shall we oppose this mystery of divine goodness, of love and of mercy, merely because it is excessive ? Shall we throw it all back upon him, and say, that thou canst not have so much benignity in thy nature ? Shall we consent that human reason remains puzzled and confounded, rather than embrace with an humble and strong faith, this act of infinite wisdom and charity, which at once explains the whole providence of God towards man, and tends to glorify the Creator, by exalting the creature ? Ye are the works of my hands, saith God, Can A Woman Forget Her Infant, So As Not To Have Pity On The Son Of Her Womb ? And If She Should Forget, Yet I Will Not Forget Thee (Isaiah xlix. 15). Yes, he has verified this, he has loved us more than his only begotten Son, whom he delivered up to death, even the death of the cross, that we might have life and salvation through him. Therefore, Rev. Sir, let us embrace with love this incarnate God of charity, and henceforth consider well the high dignity to

which our nature has been exalted.—By its union with the Eternal Word, we are become the brethren and very members of Jesus Christ, the sons of God by adoption, and in that point of view we are elevated above the Angels and the choirs of cherubim; all the glory with which Jesus Christ is honoured and distinguished must reflect on us. Never again shall he divest himself of that humanity which he has assumed; the homage of all creatures shall be for ever offered to him, as Man as well as God, and thus our nature shall be glorified before that of all other beings. As he debased himself to the lowness of our humanity, our humanity in its turn is exalted to the level of his divinity, and placed for ever on the right hand. It is for this consideration that the Church breaks forth into this exclamation on the eve of Easter: Oh happy fault! O fortunate sin of Adam, through which we have been covered with so much glory! Oh happy disgrace, which led to such an exaltation and honour. I cannot conclude, Rev. Sir, better than in the words of the enemy of Christianity, Rousseau.

“The sanctity of the gospel speaks to my soul: consider
 “the writings of philosophers with all their boast—how trifling in comparison! Is it possible that a work, at the
 “same time so sublime and so simple, can be the work of
 “men? Is it possible that he, whose history it forms, can
 “be no more than a man himself? Do we there observe
 “the style of an Enthusiast, or ambitious sectary? What
 “sweetness! what purity of manners! what amiable grace
 “in his instructions! how sublime his maxims! what profound wisdom in his speeches! what presence of mind!
 “what propriety, what justness in his answers! what a
 “command over his passions! Where is the man, where
 “is the philosopher, who knows how to act, to suffer, and
 “to die, without weakness, and without ostentation?
 “When Plato draws his imaginary just one, covered with

" all the opprobrium of guilt, and worthy of every recom-
 " pence of virtue, he exactly describes Jesus Christ.
 " The resemblance is so striking that all the Fathers have
 " noticed it, and it is not possible to be mistaken. How
 " prejudiced, how blind must he not be, who dares to draw
 " a comparison between the Son of Sophronisqua and the
 " Son of Mary! How different is one from the other!
 " Socrates dying without grief, without ignominy, easily sup-
 " ports his character to the last; and if his life had not been
 " honoured by this quiet death, we should doubt if Socrates,
 " with all his genius, was more than a sophist. He invented,
 " they say, the doctrine of the duties of common life. Others
 " before had practically taught it; he did no more than put
 " into the form of lessons what they had exemplified.
 " Aristides had been just, before Socrates said what justice
 " was. Leonidas had died for his country, before Socrates
 " had made patriotism a virtue. Sparta had been sober,
 " before Socrates praised temperance. Before he had de-
 " fined virtue, Greece abounded with virtuous men. But
 " where had Jesus learnt among the Ancients this elevated
 " and pure morality, of which he alone gave the lessons and
 " example? From the bosom of the most furious fanati-
 " cism, the most sublime wisdom made itself heard; and
 " the simplicity of the most heroic virtues honoured the most
 " vile of all nations. The death of Socrates, quietly philo-
 " sophizing with his friends, is the most agreeable that can
 " be desired;—that of Jesus expiring in torments, insulted,
 " scoffed at, and cursed by a whole people, is the most hor-
 " rible that can be conceived. Socrates, taking the cup of
 " poison, blesses the man who presents it, bathed in tears:
 " —Jesus, in the midst of the most cruel torments, prays
 " for his bloody executioners. Yes, if Socrates lived and
 " died like a Philosopher, Jesus lived and died like a God.
 " Shall we say that the history of the Gospel is nothing but

“an invention? My friends, we are not accustomed to work such inventions; and the facts relating to Socrates, of which no one doubts, are less attested than those of Jesus Christ. In short, it is evading without destroying the difficulty; it would be less easy to conceive that several persons should have agreed to fabricate this work, than that an individual should have furnished the subject. Never did any of the Jewish authors exhibit the same style—the same morality; and the Gospel has such grand, striking, and inimitable marks of truths, that the inventor would be more wonderful than the hero.”—*(Emile.)*

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERA X,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

It has always appeared to me, that the proper mode of arguing against the Unitarian System, is to prove,—1st, That it appears sufficiently plain and evident, from the Scriptures and the doctrine of the Primitive Church, that there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead. 2nd. That promises are made in the Old Testament, that one of these divine persons should be sent into the world as the Messiah, the Saviour of God's people. 3rd. That in consequence of these promises, the nature of man, that is, a human body and soul, which are the constituent parts of a man, was assumed by, and united to that divine person, who was promised to be sent into the world;—by a substantial, (or as divines call it,) an hypostatical union, so as to make the

body, soul, and divinity, but one and the same person. And 4th. That this person was he whom we Trinitarians call Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Though in reality, if only the first of these things be clearly proved, it will entirely overthrow the Unitarian System, and root up its very foundation.

LETTER III.

TO THE REV. CHARLES. LE BLANC.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST ARGUED MORE FULLY FROM
SEVERAL PASSAGES IN THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

AN Account of John and his Writings — Importance of his Gospel — Conclusive character of his testimony — Declares Jesus Christ was God, the Creator of the Natural World, the Illuminator of the Moral World — Sabellian interpretation — Socinian interpretation — Never heard of for fifteen hundred years after Christ — Dr. Priestly's views, partly Sabellian, and partly Socinian — Arian interpretation — Dr. Clarke's observations — The Catholic interpretation proved to be the only true one — Tillotson's view of the argument — Jesus knew the secrets of all hearts — The Omnipotent Saviour of all that believe.

REV. SIR,

The Writings of John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, come now more fully under consideration. We will, therefore, proceed to those parts where the Apostle delivers his own sentiments concerning the person and character of his Lord and Master. He was the last of all the Apostles,

and is said to have composed his Gospel and Epistles in his old age, about the year of our Lord ninety, and the book of Revelation five or six years afterwards.

Irenæus and Jerome inform us, that John was requested by the Bishops of Asia to write his Gospel against the rising heresies of Cerinthus and Ebion. And it is remarkable that these two heretics (especially the latter) were in many respects similar to our modern Socinians. They both denied the real and proper Divinity of Christ. They both considered him as a mere man. They were both written against by this Apostle, by Ignatius, by Justin, by Irenæus, by Tertullian, and by several others. Ought not this consideration to have had some weight with Dr. Priestley and his admirers? Irenæus says, "John, the disciple of our Lord, designing to extirpate that error, which had been sown by Cerinthus, and a great while before by the Nicolaitans, who are a branch of that heresy which is falsely called Knowledge, that he might confound them, and persuade them that there is one God who made all things by his word, and that the Creator of the Universe, and the Father of our Lord, were not, as they pretended, distinct beings, wrote his Gospel."—(See *Irenæus Adv. Hæreses*, L. 3, c. 11; see also L. 1, c. 26; consult likewise *Euseb. Ecc. Hist.* L. 6, c. 14.)

St. Jerome says, "John wrote his Gospel last of all, at the desire of the Bishops of Asia, against Cerinthus and other heretics, and the heresy of the Ebionites, which began to prevail exceedingly at that time, who asserted that Christ was not before the Virgin Mary, upon which account also he was forced to declare his divine origin."—(*Cat. Script. Proœm. in Mat.*) The same author, in another place, speaks in the following manner: "John, the Apostle and Evangelist, being in Asia, and the heresies of Cerinthus, Ebion, and others, who denied that Christ

was come in the flesh, and whom he also in his Epistle calls Antichrists, springing up at that very time, he was compelled almost by all the then Bishops of Asia, and at the earnest entreaties of many Churches, to write concerning our Saviour's Divinity more particularly. Whence it is also related in Church history, that being urged by his brethren to write, he promised that he would, provided they would all keep a fast, and implore the assistance of God on his behalf, which being accordingly performed, he was filled with the Holy Ghost, and immediately dictated as from heaven that Proœmium, *IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, &c.*"—(*Catal. Script. Eccles. in Johann. Dr. Priestly* allows that Ebion was contemporary with John.—*Letters to Dr. Horsley*, p. 18.)

Learned men are not agreed as to the precise year when the several works of this Apostle were composed, nor even which of them was written first. Yet it is generally supposed that the book of Revelations was written first, while he was in the Island of Patmos, in the Ægean Sea. This holy man seems to have had a larger share of the Spirit of illumination, and of course, spoke more fully concerning the Divine nature of the Saviour, than any other of the Evangelists. Hence we find, that each of his three larger works opens with a description of the PERSON of Christ. A few general observations upon some parts of these invaluable compositions, may not be inexpedient, and will close our evidence from the Holy Scriptures for the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And as the Gospel is the first in importance, we will commence our observations on the writings of this Apostle with the introduction to that Gospel.

"In the beginning," says this divine author, "was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the WORD WAS God. The same was in the beginning with God. All

things were made by him ; and without him was no thing made that was made. In him was life ; and the light was the light of men, and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a messenger sent from God, whose name was John : the same came as a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him ; and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name ; which were born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of God. And the WORD was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory : the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."—(John 1. 1-14. *Protestant Bible.*)

In what view we are to consider the eloquent history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, I understand not here to determine. Dr. Priestley and others have treated him in the light of an Infidel. Be this as it may, he is clearly of opinion, that John considered the Logos as a divine person. This, indeed, is what every man must suppose, I should think, where there is no preconceived support. Mr. Gibbon's words are, "The Christian revelation, which was consummated under the reign of Nerva, disclosed to the world the amazing secret, that the Logos, who was with God, from the beginning, and who God, who had made all things, and for whom all things had been made, was incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth ; who had been born of a virgin, and suffered death on the cross. The pre-existence, and divine perfecti-

the Logos, or Son of God, are clearly defined in the Gospel of John."—(Vol. 2, p. 240, 241, 4to.)

The same Mr. Gibbon, in his *Life*, written by himself, says, "that Dr. Priestley's Socinian shield has repeatedly been pierced by the spear of Horsley."

The term **WORD**, or **LOGOS**, made use of here by the Apostle, was extremely common amongst the ancient Jews; and, among other things, frequently signified the second hypostasis in the divine nature. The book of Wisdom saith, "Thine Almighty word leapt down from heaven out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war, into the midst of a land of destruction."—(Chap. xviii. 15, 17.) The Chaldee paraphrasts speak of the Logos in like manner with John in this chapter. Thus, Gen. xxxi. 22, "The **WORD** before the Lord came to Laban." And, Exod. xx. 19, "Let not the Word from before the Lord speak with us, lest we die." Isa. xlv. 12, "I by my Word have made the earth, and created man upon it." And also, Exod. xx. 19, "Let not the Lord speak with us by his Word which is before the Lord."

Philo uses the term Logos in the same sense upon various occasions. Thus: "The Word of God is over the whole world, and more ancient than all creatures."—(*De Leg. Alleg.* L. 2, p. 93.)

Amelius, the Heathen Philosopher, applies this introduction of John's Gospel in like manner to the second hypostasis.

Julian the Apostate, the most inveterate enemy Christianity ever had, makes this remarkable confession: "That Word which he (John) saith was God, he also declares was Jesus Christ, the person acknowledged by the Baptist." (*Jui-apud Cyr.* L. 10.)

Mahomet, in the Koran, says, "Eise, or Jesus, is the

Word of God; and his being, the Word of God, is among the Saracens as the proper name of Jesus Christ, that no other man is called by his name, but Jesus, whom in Arabic they call Eise."—(See *Lightfoot's* vol 1, p. 394.)

Irenæus says, "John, preaching the one Almighty and the one only begotten Son, Christ Jesus, by whom all things were made, saith, that this person is the Word of God; that this person is the only-begotten, that this person is the maker of all things, that this person is the true light who lighteth every man, that this person is the man of the world, that this is he who came unto his own, that the same person was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us." (Lib. 1, c. 1.)

Here we see this learned and pious martyr, who was a disciple of Polycarp, the Scholar of John, applies the leading characteristics of these introductory verses to the Blessed Saviour in the fullest manner. Several passages in the writings of this venerable Father are to the same purpose. "Thou art not made," says he, "for thou neither didst thou always co-exist with God, as the Word hath done." — (Ibid, L. 2, c. 43.) And again, "There is one God the Father, who is over all; the Word of God, who is through all, by whom all things were made; and this world is his property, and was created through him by the will of the Father—for the Word of God was truly the maker of the world."

Clemens Alexandrinus says:—"For both are of the same substance because he said, IN THE BEGINNING THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD."—(*Pæd.* Lib. i. c. 1.)

Novitian speaks to the same purpose: "This Word, which came unto his own, and his own received him, and not. For the world was made by him, and the world

knew him not. If Christ was only a man, how, coming into this world, came he to his own, since no man could make the world."—(*De Trin.* c. 13, 14.)

Origen, speaking of this introduction, says, "Who, though in the beginning he was with God, yet, for the sake of those who are shackled by the flesh, and therefore fleshly, was himself made flesh, that he might be comprehended by those who could not by any other means look upon him, inasmuch as he was the Word, and was with God, and was God. For God, the Word, is not to be comprehended—and the Son being incomprehensible, inasmuch as he is God the Word, by whom all things were made, and dwelt among us."—(*Cont. Cels.* Lib. 6, p. 322, 323.)

Athenagoras says, "The Son of God is the Word of the Father in power and energy; by him and through him were all things created. The Son of God is the Word and Wisdom of God. From the beginning, God being an eternal mind, must have had from all eternity, the Word in himself, and as the Wisdom and Power, he exerted himself in all things."—(*Apol.* p. 10.)

As this introduction is of high importance, in ascertaining the personal character of our blessed Saviour, every effort is used by the patrons of the different schemes of religion, to make it speak a language agreeable to the system adopted by each party. That the reader, therefore, may have the satisfaction of seeing and judging for himself, I will set down at one view, the interpretations which are given to this passage by the patrons of the several schemes.

The Sabellian (*Horac. Saletanoe*, v. 1, p. 43, line 10) interpretation runs thus:—"Before the creation of the world, Reason did exist, for Reason was then in God—indeed, was God himself, it not being possible for God to be without it.—Reason, I say, did exist in God, before the creation of the world, every portion of which was created

with the greatest Reason; nor can any thing be produced that has been made without it." This is Le Clerc's interpretation of the three first verses, and, in my opinion, carries its own refutation on the face of it.

The Socinian interpretation, which was never heard of in the world, for fifteen hundred years after Christ, is to this effect:—"In the beginning of the gospel, was the man Christ Jesus, otherwise called the Word. He was with God, having been taken up into heaven before he entered on his ministry. And he was God, having the office, honour, and title of a God conferred upon him after his resurrection. The same was in the beginning of the gospel with God. All things belonging to the Gospel-state were reformed and renewed by him; and without him, was there not any thing reformed or renewed." This interpretation, likewise, carries its own refutation along with it.

This view of the Socinian interpretation of the three first verses of this introduction, is taken from Dr. Waterland's Eight Sermons on the Divinity of Christ, and is, I believe, as accurate as is necessary. Dr. Priestley, who was at the head of his party in this country, was very wavering and changeable in his sentiments, and therefore one is at a loss how to represent his opinion. He has, however, given us the following view of this introduction in his Familiar Illustration, which seems to be partly Sabellian and partly Socinian:—"Many of the texts which are usually alleged in proof of the Divinity of Christ," says this Divine, "relate to God the Father only. One of the most remarkable of these is, John 1. To me it appears, that the Apostle does not speak of the pre-existence of Christ in this place; but only of the power and wisdom of God, which dwelt or tabernacled in his flesh; and that he probably meant to condemn some false opinions concerning the Logos (which is the Greek for word), which are known to have prevailed in

his time. Now, in contradiction to them, the Apostle here asserts, that by the Word of God, we are not to understand any being distinct from God; but only the power or energy of God, which is so much with God, that it properly belongs to his nature, and not at all distinct from God himself; and that the same power which produced all things was manifest to men in the person of Jesus Christ, who was sent to enlighten the world; that though his power made the world, it was not acknowledged by the world, when it was revealed in this manner, nor even by God's peculiar people, the Jews: and, notwithstanding this power was made manifest in a more sensible and consonant manner than ever it had been before,—dwelling in human flesh, and tabernacling, or abiding, some considerable time among us, so that his glory was beheld, or made visible to mortal eyes, and was full of grace and truth."

I could wish that you would consult Mr. Shepherd's Free Examination of the Socinian exposition of these verses, where the absurdity of it is made fully to appear. To say, as Dr. Priestley does, that these introductory verses of John's gospel relate to God the Father only, is an arbitrary and unfounded assumption, which no ingenuity can justify. He had better assert upon this occasion, as he does upon another, that rather than admit the commonly received interpretation, he would suppose the whole introduction to be an interpolation; or that the venerable Apostle dictated one thing, and his amanuensis wrote another (*See Defences of Unitarianism, for the year 1787, p. 58*). The learned Sandius confesses, that Socinus's sense of this introduction to St. John's gospel was wholly new and unheard of in the ancient church, not only among the Fathers, but likewise among heretics (*See Bishop Stillingfleet on the Trinity, p. 125*). Dr. Doddridge says, upon this introduction to John's gospel:—"I am fully sensible of the sublime and mysterious

nature of the doctrine of Christ's deity, as here declared ; and it is a matter of conscience with me thus strongly to declare my belief of it." And the no less learned Dr. Randolph assures us, that it is certain that all Christian writers have quoted this text, and argued from it, as a clear proof of the eternity and divinity of the *Son* (*See his Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, part 2, p. 30); where you will find a considerable number of testimonies from the Fathers, in addition to those I have produced above.

The Arian interpretation comes nearer to the truth, and is therefore more plausible and dangerous. For there is as much difference between it and the Orthodox faith, as between the self-existent Jehovah and the work of his hands. This construction of John, which was never openly propagated till the beginning of the fourth century, is as follows:—"In the beginning of all things, before ever the earth or the world was made, there existed a very glorious and excellent creature, since called the Word, the Oracle of God, and Revealer of his will. That excellent person, the first whom God of his own good pleasure and free choice gave being to, was with God the Father; and he was God—another God—an inferior God, infinitely inferior; but yet truly God, as being truly partaker of divine glory then, and fore-ordained to have true dominion and authority in God's own time. God employed him as an instrument, or under-agent, framing and fashioning the world of inferior creatures; and approved of his services so well as to do nothing without him."—(*See Waterland's Eight Sermons*, p. 14, 15.) Dr. Clarke's observations upon this introduction to the gospel of John are as follows:—"In the beginning—before all ages—before the creation of the world—before the world was." (John xvii. 5.) And verse 3rd of the 1st chapter,—“All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” And verse 10,

—"The world was made by him." Thus was this phrase constantly understood in the primitive church. And nothing can be more forced and unnatural, than the interpretation of the Socinian writers, who understand, In the beginning, to signify only, At the first preaching of the gospel:—"Was The Word. The Word, the Oracle of God, the great Revealer of the will of God to Mankind." (Rev. i. 5.) "The faithful witness." (Rev. iii, 14.) "The faithful and true witness." (Rev. xix. 11.) "Faithful and true." (Rev. xix. 13) And his name is called, "The Word of God. The Word, the Interpreter, and Messenger of his Father."

"And the Word was with God. Was present with God. Was with the Father." (John i. 2.) "Had glory with God before the world was." (John xvii. 5.) "I was by him as one brought up with him." (Prov. viii. 30.) "And the Word was God," was that visible person, who, under the Old Testament, appeared in the form of God: (Phil. ii. 6.) In whom the name of God was. (Exod. xxiii. 21.) "God, the angel of the Lord." (Zech. xii. 8; Hosea xii. 3, 4; Gen. xxxi. 11, 13; and Gen. xlviii. 15, 16.) God, by communication of Divinity from Him who is of himself God.—(*Origen in Johan. p. 46, Huetii.*) If this be the right interpretation of the text, continues this author, then the words, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was made flesh, mean, that the same person, who in the fulness of time was made man and dwelt with us, did before dwell with God, and acted in the capacity of a divine person,—as the visible image of the invisible God, by whom God made all things, and by whom all things were from the beginning transacted between God and the creature. But, on the other side, if the word here signifies the internal reason or wisdom of the Father, which opinion was expressly condemned at the Council of Sirmium, then the words, verse 14, "Was made flesh," can mean only

figuratively, that the wisdom of the Father dwelt in the man Christ, which is really making him no other than a mere man (*Scripture Doctrine*, pp. 72, 73).

The Catholic construction of the three first verses of this introduction is to this purpose :—" In the beginning, before the creation of the world, or the first production of any created Being whatever, the Word existed ; and the Word was no distant and separate power, estranged from God, or unacquainted with him ; but he was originally with God the Father of all, as one brought up with him. Nay, by a generation which none can fully comprehend, the Word was himself God, and possessed of a nature truly and properly divine. And when it pleased the Father to begin the work of creation, all things in the whole compass of nature, were made by this Almighty word ; and without him was not so much as one single Being, whether among the noblest or the meanest of God's various works, made that was made." This is the Catholic interpretation. And that it is the only true one is evident to me from a variety of considerations.—1. From the design of John in writing his gospel. This appears, both from Irenæus and Jerome, and also from internal evidence, to have been in opposition to the heresies of Cerinthus and Ebion, who denied the divinity of the Saviour.—(Consult the very learned Michaelis's *Introductory Lectures to the New Testament*, sect. 98—105. Where there is a particular account of the design of St. John in writing this most invaluable Gospel.) The testimonies of Irenæus and Jerome have been already produced at the beginning of this letter, as to the meaning of St. John. The internal marks arise from the various terms made use of by the Apostle in this introduction, whereby it appears, that he applies all the leading terms to Christ, which the Cerinthians and other heretics usually applied to their imaginary Æons. "He combined, in the person of him

who was made flesh and dwelt among us, whatever the earlier Gnostics attributed to the various divinities included in their genealogies. In him the whole Pleroma is contained. He is moreover the Creator, the Enlightener, the Saviour of the world; and all who believe in him, he consecrates the sons of God, and raises to the hope of immortal life.—(See a very ingenious and learned discourse by the Rev. Daniel Veysie, preached before the University of Oxford, entitled, “The Doctrine of St. John, and the Faith of the first Christians, not Unitarians,”—p. 27, 21. Dr. Waterland, also, in his Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 254, &c. has shewn at large how almost every expression in the beginning of this gospel is pointed against the heretics of those days.)

2. From the Logos’s being a term in frequent use among the Jews for the second Hypostasis in the Divine nature.

3. From the heathen application of the Logos of John, to a person truly Divine.

4. From the Christian Fathers having been unanimously of the same opinion.

5. From the Christian Church, in all ages and in all countries, having been of this opinion. This is confessedly true, both of the Catholic, the Greek, and the Protestant Churches throughout Christendom.

6. From several of the most learned English writers having given the most satisfactory reasons for this interpretation. One of these I will produce somewhat at large, and refer to several others who have given a similar account of it. The one, to which I would particularly call your attention upon this subject, is Archbishop Tillotson: in my judgment he has given a very full and satisfactory view of the Apostle’s whole argument.

This prelate has four learned and ingenious discourses upon our Lord’s divinity, which I would earnestly recom-

mend to your attentive perusal. They have frequently been cavilled with and nibbled at by the opposers of that great doctrine, but have never been fairly and honestly answered.—That is impossible,—they will maintain their good ground as long as good sense, just interpretation, and the English language, are known among men. As they are not, however, in every hand, I will present the reader with his general view of this introduction to the gospel of John, which is calculated to throw much light upon the whole doctrine of our Saviour's divinity.—“I shall consider these two things,” says he, “distinctly and severally.”

First.—The reason of this name or title of the word here given by the Evangelist to our blessed Saviour. And he seems to have done it in compliance with the common way of speaking among the Jews, who frequently called the Messiah by the name of the Word of the Lord; of which I might give many instances, but there is one very remarkable in the Targum of Jonathan, which renders those words of the Psalmist, which the Jews acknowledged to be spoken of the Messiah, viz.—The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, &c.—I say, it renders them thus: The Lord said unto his Word, sit thou on my right hand, &c. And so, likewise, Philo the Jew calls him, by whom God made the world, the Word of God, and the Son of God. And Philo probably had the same notion from the Jews, which made Amelius, the Platonist, when he read the beginning of John's gospel, to say, This Barbarian agrees with Plato, ranking the Word in the order of principles; meaning, that he made the Word the principle or efficient cause of the world, as Plato also hath done. And this title of the word was so famously known to be given to the Messiah, that even the enemies of Christianity took notice of it. Julian, the Apostate, calls Christ by this name; and Mahomet, in his Alcoran, gives this name of the Word to

Jesus the Son of Mary. But John had probably no reference to Plato, any otherwise than as the Gnostics, against whom he wrote, made use of several of Plato's words and notions. So that in all probability John gives our blessed Saviour this title, with regard to the Jews more especially, who anciently called the Messiah by this name.

Secondly.—We will in the next place consider, what might probably be the occasion why this Evangelist makes so frequent mention of this title of the Word, and insists so much upon it. And it seems to be this: nay, I think that hardly any doubt can be made of it, since the most ancient of Fathers, who lived nearest the time of John, do confirm it to us.

St. John, who survived all the Apostles, lived to see those heresies which sprang up in the beginning of Christianity, during the lives of the Apostles, grown up to a great height, to the great prejudice and disturbance of the Christian religion: I mean the heresies of Ebion, and Cerinthus, and the several sects of the Gnostics, which began from Simon Magus, and were continued and carried on by Valentinus and Basilides, Corpocrates and Menander; some of which expressly denied the divinity of our Saviour, asserting him to have been a mere man, and to have had no manner of existence before he was born, as Eusebius and Epiphanius tell us particularly concerning Ebion; which those who hold the same opinion now in our days, may do well to consider whence it had its original.

Others of them, I still mean the Gnostics, had corrupted the simplicity of the Christian doctrine, by mingling with it the fancies and conceits of the Jewish Cabalists, and of the schools of Pythagoras and Plato, and the Chaldean philosophy, more ancient than either; as may be seen in Eusebius de præparat evang. And by jumbling all these together, they had framed a confused genealogy of deities,

which they called by several glorious names, and all of them by the general name of *Æons* or *Ages* : among which they reckoned the *Life*, and the *Word*, and the *Only-begotten*, and the *Fulness*, and many other divine powers and emanations, which they fancied to be successively derived from one another. And they also distinguished between the *Maker* of the world, whom they called the *God* of the *Old Testament*, and the *God* of the *New*, and between *Jesus* and *Christ* ; *Jesus*, according to the doctrine of *Cerinthus*, as *Irenæus* tells us, being the man that was born of the *Virgin* ; and *Christ*, or the *Messias*, being that divine power or spirit, which afterwards descended into *Jesus* and dwelt in him.

If it were possible, yet it would be to no purpose, to go about to reconcile these wild conceits with one another, and to find out for what reason they were invented, unless it were to unite the people with these high swelling words of vanity, and a pretence of knowledge, falsely so called, as the *Apostle* speaks in allusion to the name of *Gnostics*, that is to say, the men of knowledge, which they proudly assumed to themselves, as if the knowledge of mysteries of a more sublime nature did peculiarly belong to them.

In opposition to all these vain and groundless conceits, *John*, in the beginning of his gospel, chooses to speak of our *Lord* ; the history of whose life and death he was going to write, by the name or title of the *Word*, a term very famous among those sects ; and shews that this *Word* of *God*, which was also the title the *Jews* anciently gave to the *Messias*, did exist before he assumed a human nature, and even from eternity : and that to this eternal *Word* did truly belong all those titles which they kept such a canting stir about ; and which they did with so much senseless nicety and subtilty distinguish from one another, as if they had been so many several emanations from the *Deity* : and he shews that this *Word* of *God* was really and truly the *Life*,

and the Light, and the Fulness, and the Only-begotten of the Father (v. 5). In him was the Life, and the Life was the Light of men; and verse 6.—And the Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not; and verses 7, 8, 9, where the Evangelist, speaking of John the Baptist, says of him, that he came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light; and that he was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light; and that Light was the true Light, which coming into the world, enlightens every man; and verse 14.—And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; and verse 16.—And of his fulness we all receive, &c. You see here is a perpetual allusion to the glorious titles which they gave to their *Æons*, as if they had been so many several deities.

In short, the Evangelist shews that all this fanciful genealogy of divine emanations, with which the Gnostics made so great a noise, was mere conceit and imagination; and that all these glorious titles did really meet in the *Messias*, who is the Word, and who, before his incarnation, was from all eternity with God, partaker of his divine nature and glory.

I have declared this the more fully and particularly, because the knowledge of it seems to me to be the only true key to the interpretation of this discourse of John, concerning our Saviour, under the name and title of the Word. And surely it is quite a wrong way for any man to go about by the mere strength and subtilty of his reason and wit, though never so great, to interpret an ancient book, without understanding and considering the historical occasion of it, which is the only thing that can give true light to it.

And this was the great and fatal mistake of Socinus; to go to interpret Scripture merely by criticising upon words, and searching into all the senses that they are possibly

capable of, till he can find one, though ever so forced and foreign, that will save harmless the opinion which he was before-hand resolved to maintain, even against the most natural and obvious sense of the text which he undertakes to interpret: just as if a man should interpret ancient statutes and records by mere critical skill in words, without any regard to the true occasion upon which they were made, and without any manner of knowledge and insight into the history of the age in which they were written."

Such are the reasonings of Tillotson upon this introduction to John's Gospel. To me they are perfectly satisfactory: and, when considered in connection with the great chain of evidence from the beginning of the world to the present time, they contain an unquestionable proof of the eternal divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. (For further evidence on this important passage of Holy Scripture, consult Burnet on the Articles, art. 2, p. 54-56; Bull's Judgment of the Catholic Church, c. 2; Grotius, Lightfoot, Hammond, and Whitby, on the place. See also Dr. Randolph's Vindication, p. 2, p. 23-32. The learned Bishop Pearson hath vindicated the orthodox interpretation with his usual ability in his Exposition of the Creed, p. 116-119. See likewise Mr. Charles Leslie's unanswerable reasonings on these verses of St. John, in his excellent Dialogues on the Socinian Controversy.)

"Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."—(John ii. 24, 25.) In this passage, the Apostle bears witness to the omniscience of his Divine Master, which is an attribute peculiar to the Deity.

"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God."—(John xiii. 3.) In these words, John declares

the pre-existence and omnipotence of Christ: an omnipotence indeed derived from his Father; but this is what all are agreed in: Seeing the Son of God confessedly acts by a power derived from his Father, as truly as every earthly offspring acts by a power derived from his earthly parent. We may observe farther, that this same divine author tells us expressly, that he wrote his Gospel in order to prove Jesus to be Christ, and the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name.

"Many other signs truly," says he, "did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."—(John xx. 30, 31.) This is a proper close to a book, where the author had first insisted on the personal dignity of the Redeemer, and then confirmed what he had advanced by an induction of particular and supernatural actions, together with a variety of reasonings on those actions. And, upon the whole, it satisfactorily appears, that the person of whom the Apostle had been writing, was indeed the true and proper Son of God, who was in the beginning with God, and who was God, but who, in the *fulness of time*, was made flesh for the redemption of the human race.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERAX,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

As to the eternal generation of Christ, which you object so violently to, I assert, without fear of contradiction, that

Christ as the Word, is begotten by eternal generation from God the Father; and I will demonstratively prove it from one single verse of Scripture, viz. the 7th of the 2nd Psalm, and which will suffice to set this dogma beyond the possibility of a doubt. "The Lord hath said to me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." It is most certain that these words are to be understood of the Messiah, or of Christ; for, not to say anything of the ancient Jews, who all understood them of the Messiah, as the very learned Huet decidedly proves in his *Evangelical Demonstration*, 77th Proposition, No. XIV. we can have no better interpreter of these words than St. Paul, who was ravished into the third heaven. Now this great Doctor of the Gentiles expressly says, that those Words were said of Jesus Christ (Acts xiii. 33): "This same (promise) hath God fulfilled to our Children, raising up Jesus Christ again, as in the second Psalm also is written: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." And in his Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 4): "Being made so much better than the Angels, as he has inherited a more excellent name above them. For to which of the Angels has he said at any time: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Now, let us weigh every word of this important passage:—1st. "The Lord has said to me;" not to others, but to me, as the word; to me, singularly and properly. Next, "Thou art my Son;" Thou, and no other: Christ, therefore, is the only begotten, and single Son of God; not adoptive, as all just Men and Angels are, but natural, begotten "from the womb," that is, out of the substance of God, as it is said, Psalm cix. 3: "From the womb before the day-star I begot thee." In a word, he is the Son of God, that, according to the Apostle (Heb. i. 4, 5),—this denomination cannot belong to any other. "To which of the Angels has he said at any time: Thou art my Son, this day have

I begotten thee?"—this day, that is to say, from all eternity, or "before the day-star;" as it is said, Psalm cix.—Psalm v. 3. And, "from the days of eternity" (Micheas, v. 2); because, as the Eternity of God exists always entire, and is an indivisible and immoveable Now, on which, St. Augustine observes, Psalm ii. No. 2, "Nothing is past, as if it had ceased to be, nor future, as it were not as yet." It is most properly expressed by the word *Hodie*, this day; and hence God himself expressed his eternal and permanent Being by a word, in the present tense (Exod. iii. 14): "I am who am. Thus shalt thou say to the Children of Israel: He who is, has sent me to you." Many other passages I might bring forward in support of the dogma under consideration, but this one text, taken from the 2nd Psalm, being so very peremptory and decisive, puts the question at rest for ever.

The Christian Fathers of the Church are all on the side of the Christian Dogma. St. Ignatius Martyr, in his Epistle to the Magnesians, speaks thus: "There is one God, who has made himself known by Jesus Christ his Son; who is his Eternal Word, that went out from him not after a silence;" that is to say, not as if there had been a time in which the Word did not exist.—"*Unus est Deus, qui seipsum reddidit per Jesum Christum filium Suum; qui est ipse verbum sempiternum non post silentium progressum.*" But I refer you to *Dialog-cum Tryph.* Athenegoras in his Apology for the Christians. St. Theophilus of Antioch, in his 2nd Book to Autoloyeus. St. Irenæus, 3rd Book against Heresies, c. xviii. Tertullian against Praxeas, c. viii. St. Clement of Alexandria, who explicitly teaches, that the Eternal Word made this Universe.—"*Unus est Christus, qui est in patre co-eternum verbum.*" St. Dionysius of Alexandria, in his Epistle to Paul of Somosata.

Therefore from the testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers,

it is incontrovertibly demonstrated, that it was the steady and uniform belief of the first ages of the Church, that Jesus Christ, as the Word, is begotten by the Father, by an ineffable and eternal Generation, and that, of course, he is True God; although some would endeavour, in the face of all truth, to persuade the Public, that the Ante-Nicene Fathers were all Unitarians.—(See Letter XVI.)

LETTER IV.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST ARGUED FROM SOME PASSAGES
IN THE EPISTLE OF 1ST ST. JOHN.

Humanity and Deity of Christ—The Docetæ, Cerinthians, and Ebionites censured—The Apostle maintains that Jesus Christ is the only Propitiation for Sin—Why Socinians deny the atonement—View of the doctrine given by Dr. Samuel Johnson—Displays the infinity of the love of God—Jesus one with the Father and the Holy Ghost—Objections answered—Authorities cited—Reference to other authorities—Jesus Christ the True God and Eternal Life—Opinion of Doddridge—Clarke and Whiston.

REV. SIR,

This same Apostle begins his first Epistle with a description of the divinity and humanity of Jesus, and ends it with the strongest declaration of his supreme Deity. And all this he does in opposition to the several heresies of the age in which he lived. For, it is well known by the learned, there were some then who denied the divinity of our Saviour, and others who ran into the contrary extreme

and denied his humanity. In opposition to which errors, John, by his apostolical authority, asserts both the one and the other at the very opening of this divine discourse. He had been peculiarly loved by his Master, and he retained a peculiar concern for the honour of his Master. And as he introduced his Gospel with an account of his divine nature, and then proceeded to his incarnation, so here he introduces this Epistle with an account of his divinity and humanity jointly: "That which was from the beginning, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life; for the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." 1 John i. 3. This is a description both of the Saviour's humanity and divinity. (The Holy Apostle plainly censures the same heretics, the Docetæ, Cerinthians, and Ebionites, in the first Epistle also, and calls them all by that one name of the Antichrists, as Irenæus, Tertullian, and others of the ancients have observed. See *Bishop Bull's Judgment of the Catholic Church of the three first centuries concerning the necessity of believing that our Lord Jesus Christ is true God*, chap. 2, sect. 5, where there is an admirable illustration of the several phrases in this Epistle which allude to the heresies then prevailing in the Church.) "That which was from the beginning—the Word of life—that Eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us,"—are all expressions of similar import with several of those in the introduction to his gospel, and are intended to oppose the heresy of those persons who said Jesus Christ was nothing more than a mere man, and had no existence before he was born. So the expressions, "Which we have heard—which we have seen with our eyes—which we have looked up—and our hands have handled of the word of life,"

—are all expressions intended to oppose the heresy of those who denied his real humanity, and said he had no body, but only in appearance.

The next place in this epistle, which asserts the divinity of the Son of God, is that in the beginning of the second chapter, where it is said:—"If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John ii. 1, 2). Now, though this passage does not say in direct terms, that Jesus is more than man, yet it declares such things of him as cannot be predicted of any mere man. For the atonement for the sins of the world, which Jesus made by the shedding of his blood, and which is so strongly expressed in these words, implies absolutely the super-humanity of Jesus. Common sense will tell any person, that man cannot atone for man. Hence we find, that all the Socinians, who deny the divinity of Christ, deny the atonement of Christ. For the atonement for sin implies the divinity. If therefore these words assert the doctrine of the atonement, they assert at the same time the doctrine of the divinity. They stand or fall together.

I transcribe here the short view of the doctrine of Atonement which Dr. Samuel Johnson gave to his friend Mr. Boswell:—"Whatever difficulty there may be in the conception of vicarious punishments, it is an opinion which had possession of mankind in all ages. There is no nation that has not used the practice of Sacrifices. Whoever, therefore, denies the propriety of vicarious punishments, holds an opinion which the sentiments and practice of mankind have contradicted from the beginning of the world. The great Sacrifice for the sins of mankind was offered at the death of the Messiah, who is called in Scripture, The Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. To

judge of the reasonableness of the scheme of redemption, it must be considered as necessary to the government of the Universe, that God should make known his perpetual and irreconcilable detestation of moral evil. He might indeed punish, and punish only the offenders : but as the end of punishment is not revenge of crimes, but propagation of virtue, it was more becoming the divine clemency to find another manner of proceeding, less destructive to man, and at least equally powerful to promote goodness. The end of punishment is to reclaim and warn. That punishment will both reclaim and warn, which shews evidently such abhorrence of sin in God, as may deter us from it, or strike us with dread of vengeance when we have committed it. This is effected by vicarious punishments. Nothing could more fully testify the opposition between the nature of God and moral evil, or more amply display his justice to men and angels, to all orders and successions of beings, than that it was necessary for the highest and purest nature, even for Divinity itself, to pacify the demands of vengeance by a painful death ; of which the natural effect will be, that when justice is appeased, there is a proper place for the exercise of mercy ; and that such propitiation shall supply in some degree the imperfections of our obedience, and the inefficacy of our repentance : for obedience and repentance, such as we can perform, are still necessary. Our Saviour has told us, that he did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil ;—to fulfil the typical law, by the performance of what those types had foreshewn ; and the moral law, by precepts of greater purity and higher exaltation. The peculiar doctrine of Christianity is, that of an universal sacrifice and perpetual propitiation. Other prophets only proclaimed the will and the threatenings of God : Christ satisfied his justice ”—(*Life of Johnson by Boswell*, vol. 2, p. 404).

"Hereby perceive we the Love of God, because he laid down his life for us"—(1 John iii, 16). Some copies of this Epistle omit the words, Of God; and hence it has been thought that they are an interpolation. Whether this is the case or otherwise, I undertake not to determine. It is certain, however, that the context requires the words to make sense of the passage: nor will any other fill it up with equal propriety.

"Hereby know ye the spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God. And this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already it is in the world"—(1 John iv, 2, 3). This language is perfectly proper on the supposition of Christ's pre-existence; but very improper on the contrary supposition; for how could a mere man come otherwise than in the flesh?—(*Price's Sermons*, p. 136.)

"In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. And the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world"—(1 John iv, 9, 10, 14). Where was the extraordinary love of God in sending his Son, if that Son was a mere man like all other men? If such only is their meaning, the Scriptures mock and deceive us. But if Jesus is possessed of a divine nature, and was with the Father before the world existed, and if he assumed human nature, and in that nature made a real, full, and proper atonement for the sins of the world,—then we may easily discover the love of God to mankind in sending his Son to die; and all those Scriptures which speak of God's

singular love to his creatures are easy to be comprehended, and admit of the most reasonable interpretation.

“For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”—(1 John v. 7.)

Though we grant this text is not quoted by the Nicene Council against the Arians, and is not found in many ancient copies; nay, though we should grant, that it was not originally in the Epistle of John, it is, however, a good argument for the doctrine of the Trinity. For if it were a marginal note, and so crept into the text, this however, shows it to have been the opinion of the most ancient and primitive Christians, who put this comment to the text. If they say this was put in by the orthodox, it was done in opposition to the heretics; this was a sufficient evidence of their firm belief of the doctrine of the Trinity then. But if this text was expunged by the Arians, who, as St. Ambrose observes of them, were remarkable for this sort of fraudulent dealing with the Scriptures, then there was a great deal of reason for restoring it.—(See Fox on the place for the above quotation.)

Be it genuine or otherwise, the same sentiment is found in other parts of Scripture, and the ancient Christian writers abound with expressions of a similar nature. The Historians of the martyrdom of St. Ignatius say: “Glorifying our Jesus Christ, through whom, and with whom, glory and power be to the Father, with the Holy Ghost, in the holy church for ever and ever. Amen.” Polycarp died expressing his gratitude to God in these words: “I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, through the eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, through whom, to thee, with him, in the Holy Ghost, be glory both now, and to all succeeding ages. Amen.” Tertulian has many

passages like unto this of John: "I do testify," says he, "that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are undivided one from another."—(*Adv. Prax.* c. 9.) Again: "Two Gods or two Lords we never have named with our mouth: not as if the Father were not God, and the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, and each of them God."—(*Ibid.* cap. 13.) Again: "I every where hold one substance in three cohering together."—(*Ibid.* 12.) He alludes also to this text when he says: "These three are one (essence), not one (person); in like manner as our Lord hath said, I and the Father are one (essence), having regard only to the unity of substance, not to the singularity of number."—(*Ibid.* cap. 25.) St. Cyprian seems to have a full quotation of this text with very little variation: "The Lord saith, I and the Father are one." And again, concerning the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, it is written: "And these three are one."—(*De Unit. ec liber.*)

Upon this declaration, so full and absolute, and accompanied by such testimonies, I will make no comment, but leave you to your own reflections. It should seem, if the Father be God, so is the Son, and so is the Holy Ghost, and yet they are not three, but one God. And whether the text is genuine or spurious, it is so much in the spirit of several others, that the doctrine of Christ's Divinity and the Holy Trinity neither stand nor fall with it. (Whoever wishes to see what has been advanced for and against the authenticity of this text, may consult Mills, Hammond, Pool, Henry, and Guise, in loco. See also Jones on the Trinity, ch. 3, sect. 18. There are various other persons who have written on both sides of this question. The writers who have embarked in the controversy are, Mr. Archdeacon Travis, in his letters to Mr. Gibbon in favour of it, and Messrs. Porson and Marsh against. Much is to be said on

both sides. In point of manuscripts, however, the evidence I think is clearly against it. But the context seems to me plainly to want the passage. The evidence of Tertullian and Cyprian too is very considerable. As this is the case, it would be wrong to give up the text ; but imprudent to lay any very serious stress upon it, in a controversy of any magnitude. You will find a pretty accurate compendium of the arguments, both for and against the authenticity of this warmly contested passage, in the notes of the New Testament in Greek and English, printed for Roberts, 1729. The author seems to have been an Arian, and discovers in places great bitterness of spirit against those who differ from him, and therefore should be read with caution ; but upon the whole, it is a work of some ability. He appears to wander far from the truth in his interpretation of some of the prophecies.)

See also 1 John v, 20.—“We know,” &c. &c.

Dr. Doddridge observes upon this passage, that it is an argument of the Deity of Christ, which almost all who have wrote in its defence have urged ; and which, I think, none who have opposed it, have so much as appeared to answer.

Dr. Clarke has treated this text with a great degree of disingenuousness. (*See his Scripture Doctrine*, page 51.) It is the more remarkable that he should apply this passage to the Father of our Lord, seeing he speaks such strong things of the Deity of the Son in other parts of his writings. In his Reply to the Objections of Robert Nelson, Esq., he says: The Son is by communication of divine power and dominion from the Father, really and truly God (p. 50). He is really and truly God (p. 52). The Son is true God, by communication of divinity from the Father (p. 62). Christ is by nature truly God: as truly, as man is by nature truly man (p. 81). His friend Whiston also, in his Vindication of the Council of Nice, says: Jesus Christ is

truly God and Lord. He is a God by nature; and was such before his incarnation, nay, before the creation of the world? (p. 8.)

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERAX.

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

You are pleased to say, that Christ is "never in any sense called God in Scripture." I find myself under a necessity of endeavouring to establish a criterion by which we may know whether he is or is not called God in Scripture. Now I do not know of any better rule to judge by in this matter than the Divine Titles, the name of God, and particularly the incommunicable name of God, Jehovah, which is attributed to him in the Scriptures. I do not indeed pretend to say, that I can produce any text of Scripture where it is expressly said Christ is Jehovah; but if I make it plainly appear that he who in one passage of the Scripture is called Jesus Christ, is the very same person who in another passage of the Scripture is called Jehovah, I think I shall then have demonstrated what I have undertaken to prove. I certainly know not what books you look on to be Scripture, and what you reject. However you must make me acquainted with your sentiments on this subject; I consider all the books as canonical which are received as such by the universal Church.

LETTER V.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST ARGUED FROM SOME PASSAGES
IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

The Book of Revelation a portion of the Sacred Volume—The Seven Spirits before the Throne—Personal dignity and glory of Jesus—He is God, eternal and omnipotent—The visible and invisible Worlds are under his controul—Influence of the Truth upon Dr. Doddridge—Rev. ii. 23, compared with 1 Kings, viii. 39; an impregnable proof of the Saviour's absolute Deity—All the Angels of Heaven worship him—John calls him, the Word of God, King of Kings, the Great God, the Temple of Heaven, Light of Heaven, the Judge of the World, Root and Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star—Closes the Code of Scripture with a direct prayer to our Lord Jesus Christ.

REV. SIR,

The Book of Revelation is one of the most extraordinary and best authenticated of all the compositions in the Sacred Volume, and is supposed to have been written the last of all, and yet it is the most curiously constructed of all. It is composed with more than human skill, and has more human authority than any book of the New Testament besides, even from the time it was delivered. (*Mede*, p. 602.) I do not find any other book of the New Testament so strongly attested or commented upon so early as this of the Apocalypse. (Sir Isaac Newton's observations on Daniel, p. 249. Consult Lardner's credibility, *passim*, for its authority.)

It opens with a description of the Person of Jesus in his present glorified humanity, and displays many of the secrets of the invisible world. In the first chapter we have

a prayer to the Three Persons jointly, Father, Son, and Spirit, with an ascription of praise to the Son alone; and then a particular account of the Person of that Son, as he appeared to his servant John.

“ John to the Seven Churches which are in Asia ; grace be unto you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne ; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth : Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father ; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”— (Rev. i. 4—6.)

By the Seven Spirits must be meant one or more persons, since he wishes or declares grace and peace from them. Now either this must be meant of Angels, or of the Holy Ghost. There are no where prayers made, or blessings given in the name of Angels. This were, indeed, a worshipping them ; against which there are express authorities, not only in the other books of the New Testament, but in this book in particular. Nor can it be imagined that Angels would have been named before Jesus Christ : so then it remains, that SEVEN being a number, imports both variety and perfection, and that was the sacred number among the Jews, this is a mystical expression ; which is no extraordinary thing in a book which is all mysterious. And it imports one person, from whom all that variety of gifts, administrations, and operations, that were then in the Church, did flow : and this is the Holy Ghost. But as to his being put in order before Christ, as upon the supposition of an equality, the going out of the common order is no great matter (Burnet on the Art. p. 48) ; so since there was to come after this a full period that concerned

Christ, it might be a natural way of writing to name him last.

After this prayer to the Three Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, and ascription of praise to the Son alone, comes in a description of the person of the Judge of the world.

"Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him: even so, Amen. I am ALPHA and OMEGA, the BEGINNING and the ENDING, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."—(Rev. i. 7, 8.) Here we see, two of the incommunicable perfections of God are expressly applied to the Redeemer of mankind. It will, therefore, follow, that he is, together with his Father, God eternal and omnipotent.

All the ancients, both before and after the Council of Nice, understand this text of God the Son. I will give a specimen here again of their sentiments. Hermas tells us, "that the name of the Son of God is great and without bounds, and the whole world is supported by it."—(*Sim.* 9, sect. 14.) Barnabas says, "Christ is Lord of the whole earth."—(*Epist.* sect. 5.) Tertullian says, "Christ is in his own right God Almighty, as he is the Word of Almighty God."—(*Cont. Prax.* c. 17.) Clemens Alexandrinus hath this saying, "He can want nothing, who hath the Word, the Almighty God. For the Word is a possession that has nothing wanting to it."—(*Prædag.* c. 7.) Origen has the following observation: "That you may know the omnipotence of the Father and the Son to be one and the same God and Lord with the Father, hear John speaking in the Revelation in this manner,—These things saith the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty. For who is the Almighty that is to come, but Christ?"—(*De princip.* lib. 1, p. 673.)

"I am ALPHA and OMEGA, the first and the last."

This is repeated more than once, with some little variation. "I am the first and the last.—I have the keys of hell and of death.—To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.—I will give thee a crown of life."—(Rev. i. and xi.) These expressions seem to denote, not only the eternity of the Son of God, but that all the invisible world is absolutely under his control; that he is the Lord of it, killing and making alive at his own pleasure; and that it is his province to reward or doom all the children of men as he judges meet. These appear to be characters infinitely unsuitable to mere glorified humanity.

Dr. Doddridge says on this verse, "That these titles, Alpha and Omega, first and last, should be repeated so soon, in a connection which demonstrates they are given to Christ, will appear very remarkable, whatever sense be given to the eighth verse. The argument drawn in the preceding note upon it, would have been strong, wherever such a passage as this has been found; but its immediate connection with this greatly strengthens it. And I cannot forbear recording it, that this text has done more than any other in the Bible, towards preventing me from giving into that scheme, which would make our Lord Jesus Christ no more than a deified creature."

"All the Churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and heart."—(Rev. ii. 23.) If this declaration of our Saviour be compared with what King Solomon says of God,—*"Thou, even thou only, O God, knowest the hearts of all the children of men,"* (1 Kings viii. 39,)—it will follow, that Christ challengeth to himself one of the incommunicable properties of the Divine Being. And I think every candid person must allow, that language like the several passages above, very ill becomes the character of any merely human creature.

After the Son of God had thus made his appearance, spoken in the highest style of Deity, and dictated an Epistle to each of the seven Churches in Asia, in which these, and various other similar declarations of the Son of God, occur; we are favoured with a view of the heavenly inhabitants; and there we see Jesus seated upon a throne, and receiving from all the angelic world equal honour and praise with his everlasting Father.

“After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven. And, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb, as it had been slain: and he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts, and four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of Saints. (Here is both worship and prayer offered to the Lamb—the prayers of all the Saints.) And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” (Rev. chap. iv. and v.) Let men in this world

treat the Saviour of Mankind with what indignity they may, it is evident from these passages, that the angels in heaven are perfectly well acquainted with his nature, and the claims he hath upon their services. "All the angels of God worship him!" And shall ungrateful man, whom he hath redeemed at the price of his blood, refuse him that honour?

In another part of this extraordinary book, the Lord Jesus is represented as the great Vicegerent of his Father, and heading all the inhabitants of the upper world: "I saw heaven opened; and, behold a white horse: and he that sat upon him was called, Faithful and True—and his name is called, the Word of God. (Does not this title, given here to our Saviour, amount to demonstration, that he is the person described in the first chapter of this author's gospel, under the character of the Word.) And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And he had on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (Rev. xix. *passim*).

Jesus is called "The great God," (Rev. xix. 17,) in conformity with Isaiah's "Mighty God," and Paul's "Great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

Soon after this, we find the Son, in common with the Father, is spoken of as the Temple of Heaven; which, though a mode of speaking highly figurative, is yet ascribing an honour to the Son, which appears incompatible with simple humanity:—"And an angel talked with me, saying, Come hither, and I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit, and shewed me that great City, the holy Jerusalem. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Rev. xxi. 9, 10, 22).

It is further remarkable, that as the Lord God Almighty

and the Lamb are in common considered as the temple of the heavenly Jerusalem, so the Lamb in common with God is the light of the city :—"The city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it : for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."—(Rev. xxi. 23.)

It may be observed still farther, that by a similar manner of speaking, if the throne of God is mentioned, so is that of the Lamb ; and what is very remarkable, is, that God and the Lamb are said to have but One throne :—"And the angel shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in the city."—(Rev. xxii. 1, 3.)

"The Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done."—(Rev. xxii. 6.) Compare this with the 16th verse :—"I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." The angel that appeared to John was the angel of the Lord God, and the Lord God sent him : but he was the angel of Jesus, and Jesus sent him : therefore Jesus is the Lord God of the holy prophets. (Consult Waterland's Eight Sermons for a vindication of this application, and for the testimonies of the fathers, p. 214—218.)

This most sublime book shuts up the canon of Scripture with several expressions, very unsuitable, as it should seem, to the character of mere glorified humanity, but perfectly consistent and proper, if Jesus is possessed of essential divinity.

"Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his worth shall be."—(Rev. xxii. 12.) There he speaks as the Judge of the world, and the Arbiter of the final fates of men.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the

first and the last.”—(Rev. xxii. 13.) Here the Son of God proclaims his own eternity.

“I am the root and the offspring of David.”—(Rev. xxii. 16.) This we have noticed before, as expressive of the Redeemer’s pre-existence. As God he was David’s Lord, as man, David’s Son.

“I am the bright and morning star.”—(Rev. xxii. 16.) I am he that was prophesied of by Balaam as the “Star which should rise out of Jacob”—(Num.); and by Malachi, (iv. 2,) as “The Sun of righteousness,” which should enlighten all the ends of the earth.

“Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus.”—(Rev. xxii. 20.) This is a direct prayer to the Saviour of mankind to hasten his coming. The Apostle then closes the whole book with another more indirect one for his readers:—

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.—Amen.”

“A plain and serious Christian,” says Dr. Davies, “who is more conversant with his Bible than with controversial writings, must be at a loss to conceive, how any persons acknowledging the divine original of the Scriptures, are able to evade the force of the numerous testimonies they contain for the deity and atonement of Christ.

“But possibly such a person is not aware of the amazing powers of a certain instrument, which learned men have invented, for their assistance in the interpretation of Scripture, and which is called “Biblical Criticism.” By a dexterous use of this, they are able to elicit from the Scriptures almost any meaning they please. It were easy to adduce some very curious examples of this. Criticism asserts ‘that Scripture gives no countenance to the supposed existence of holy angels, or of apostate angels, or devils; that they represent man as consisting entirely of a

material body, without the addition of a distinct intellectual soul or spirit; and that, consequently, he becomes totally extinct at death.' To reconcile the Scripture to such opinions as these, a new translation shall be proposed of such passages as appear to teach the opposite sentiments; or the original text may have been corrupted, and must be amended; the literal meaning must be rejected, and the language admitted to be figurative or metaphorical. Should any text continue stubborn, and refuse to submit to the gloss imposed, it shall be pronounced an interpolation, and must be expunged. Biblical criticism will use its pruning knife unmercifully, and lop off not only single verses, but whole chapters. Nay, it has been intimated by one bold critic, that four gospels are a superfluous incumbrance; that three of them may be well spared, and one retained, as abundantly sufficient. Do not these attempts to curtail and garble the Scriptures, discover, on the part of the critic, a consciousness, if not an avowal, that the plain and unconstrained language of Scripture militates against him.

"The same gentlemen are, likewise, much influenced by a sentiment, which some are willing to regard as an axiom in theology—'That where mystery begins, faith and religion ends.' But is there an attribute of the great and blessed God, the investigation of which will not involve the human mind in mysteries and difficulties beyond its ability to unravel?

"God is eternal. Can you conceive of a duration in which there is no succession, and to which there can be no addition? Or dare you, absurdly and blasphemously, to say, that the eternal God is older this day than when he made the world?—God is Omnipresent. Can reason inform you, how the spiritual essence of God fills heaven and earth, without extension or division into parts? or, even discern

its possibility?—God is Omnipotent. Can reason form an idea of a power, no more exhausted by the creation of a world, than by the production of an insect?—God is Omniscient. But who can comprehend that knowledge, which has been always complete and perfect; and incapable of improvement, by the accession of a single idea before unknown?

“Is it not a maxim of indisputable authority, that nothing can exist without a cause? And is it not on this principle that reason asserts the existence of God? Because there are beings that exist now, you justly infer that something must ever have existed. As it is absurd to suppose an infinite succession of causes, (since in every series there must be a first member, with which it commences,) you are constrained to acknowledge a first cause, which owes its existence to no other, and that is—God. For every effect, you require a proportionate cause. Assign, therefore, if you are able, the origin or cause of the existence of the eternal God. You will very naturally mention his necessary existence and self-origination. But, is there any distinct idea conveyed by those terms which the human mind is able to grasp or comprehend? The existence of creatures compels us to admit the existence of an Almighty Creator; but their existence is only the evidence of his existence, and, in no respect, the reason or the cause of it.

“Is there not here a difficulty, which reason is utterly unable to solve, and a mystery altogether unfathomable? Must not reason submit to receive the assistance of faith, before it can fully embrace the first and the most important of all truths—that there is a God? Why, then, should not the testimony of divine revelation to the deity of Christ, and the mystery of his incarnation, be allowed equal authority as is granted to the conclusions of reason for the existence of God, since the one is not attended with greater

difficulties than the other! In short, if we are determined not to part with the first principles of religion, aspiring reason must bow to revelation, and accept the alliance of faith. As to myself, I pray that my mind may be always influenced by the sentiment so beautifully expressed by the excellent and pious Doctor Watts:—

‘Where reason fails with all her powers,
There faith prevails, and love adores.’”

(*Dr. B. Davis's Sermon on the Deity of the Saviour*, p. 45—49.)*

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

V E R A X,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

Let us for a moment suppose this hypostatical union to be dissolved, and not to exist, and see what would be the consequence. In that case it would not be true to say, that God gave his life for us; all that could be said would be, that God gave the life of the man Christ Jesus for us. So neither would it be true to say, that Christ is over all, God blessed for ever; all that could be said of this would be, that he who is over all, God blessed for ever, inhabited

* Jesus Christ and his Apostles everywhere allow both the Law and the Prophets to be from God. Had they taught any thing which would have charged a falsehood on either, they must then indeed have been said to contradict Divine Revelation before given, and would thereby have fallen under that character and mark of False Prophets; but they were so far from this, that the Law and the Prophets were the ground work which they founded all their doctrines upon; although the Gospel abolished the Law, it was not by contradicting or condemning it, but by perfecting and fulfilling it in that manner as all the Prophets foreshowed that it should.

and spoke in the man Christ Jesus. The like may be said of all the other passages of Scripture wherein the works of God are ascribed to Christ, or the actions and sufferings by which mankind were redeemed are ascribed to God. Wherefore, if the nature of God and the nature of man be not united by such a substantial union in the one person of Christ Jesus, the Scriptures may be stated to be the baneful source of the most fatal delusion, and written to lead mankind into the most gross error.

LETTER VI.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

OUR SAVIOUR DID NOT SPEAK IN LANGUAGE THAT IS
ABSURD OR RIDICULOUS.

REV. SIR,

As Jehovah is the God of truth, it cannot be supposed, without shocking impiety, that he ever designed to betray us into error, by speaking to us in ambiguous and deceitful language. If, then, such a procedure would be considered as contrary to his eternal truth, it is no less inconsistent with his wisdom, nor less derogatory to the dignity of his Revelation, to speak in language that is absurd and ridiculous : yet such is the language of the Bible in many places, if understood according to the principles of our opposers.

What expressions, for instance, can be more ridiculous than these, if Christ be a mere man, honoured with the name of God on account of his ministry? "He was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh?" What is the meaning of the term *flesh*? If you understand it as opposed to spirit, the sense of the passage will be,—He was made of the seed of David, according to the body, not according to the soul. A goodly way of speaking, this, for Gamaliel's pupil,—for Christ's apostle to use! Alexander had a body and soul; yet all would unite in pronouncing that man contemptibly weak, who should say: Alexander was made of the seed of Philip, according to the flesh. Nay, the language would be absurd in the mouth of one, who believes the conqueror of the world to be the son of Jupiter. For such an one should say: Alexander was not the son of Philip; not, He was the son of Philip, according to the flesh. It may, perhaps, be said,—“These words—‘according to the flesh,’ are opposed, not to the nature of Christ, but to his heavenly offices and divine ministry; and the meaning is,—Jesus was made of the seed of David, not as he is God, or as he is honoured with a divine ministry, but as he is man, or possessed of a corporal nature.” But Peter was the son of Zebedee, not as an apostle, but as a man; his Apostleship being a divine office, and coming immediately from God. Yet this proposition, Peter was made of the seed of Zebedee, according to the flesh, would be ridiculous. “The text under consideration may imply, that Jesus Christ had a nobler origin than other men, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit.” But it is not the power, by which, but the matter, of which, he was made, that is intended by these words: “He was made according to the flesh.” Again: Jesus was made of the seed of David, and made flesh by the power of the Holy Ghost. This proposition, therefore,—“He was made of the seed of David, according

to the flesh," is, in the sense of Scripture, equivalent to this,—He was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, by the Holy Ghost. And if so, we are still at a loss for the meaning of, "He was made, according to the flesh." For if Christ be a mere man by nature, these expressions,—"according to the flesh," are perfectly ridiculous. Equally absurd, on the Socinian hypothesis, is that celebrated saying of our Lord's: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." If you, Rev. Sir, expound these words, of the glory which Jesus had in the Divine decree, you render the expressions absurd, being contrary to the common forms of speech. For it is as if a man should say: 'Give me, Lord, the health which I had with thee before the world was. Feed me, O Father, with my daily bread, with which I was fed in thy presence before the world was created. Grant, O gracious God, that I may safely arrive at that celestial place where I was with thee before the foundation of the world.' Many other instances might be adduced of that ridiculous air which the Socinian sentiment gives to the language of inspiration, but these may suffice. The same perverse hypothesis renders the language of Scripture impious and blasphemous. This impiety has various degrees. For instance, the sacred writers, when speaking of Jesus Christ, take no care to avoid such expressions as might give occasion to blasphemy. Of which number are these: God; Equal with God; The Creator of all things; Worship, and others of a similar kind which were never piously used but to express the glory of the Eternal Sovereign. Again: they represent Jesus Christ as using these expressions in connection with others, which imply an excessive and criminal familiarity with God, if he be not of the same essence with him. As when he calls himself the Son, the Own Son, and the Only Son of

God ; asserting that God is his Father, not occasionally, and so as to intimate that he claims the divine relation only in a figurative sense ; but frequently in the most solemn discourses, and that without any limitation, saying, My Father, when an Apostle would have said, my God ; plainly signifying that he assumes the exalted title in a literal and proper sense. Further : this impiety appears to a shocking degree, in the writers of the New Testament placing a creature on an equality with the Creator, by such expressions as these : “He thought it not robbery to be equal with God.—Philip, he who hath seen me hath seen the Father.” As if he who beholds the glimmering of a glow-worm, saw the splendour of the meridian sun ! And by attributing to Jesus, a mere man, the same authority as they do to the Father, in the great commission which was given to the Apostles.—“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” As if one should say, Go and enrol the people, by the order of the King and his Slave ! A still further degree of impiety consists in this : when the penmen of Scripture express the honour which is due to Jesus Christ, they do it by the general term Worship, without ever giving the least intimation that it means a subordinate worship, or that there is any such thing ; though, on the principles of our opponents, there is as great difference between supreme and subordinate adoration, as there is between the Creator and the creature. And though it be certain, that if a man should frequently give the title of Majesty to any one but the King, he would be highly culpable in the eye of his Sovereign, whatever mental distinction he might make between supreme and subordinate Majesty ; because terms have their signification principally from general custom, not from the particular fancy of the person who uses them. Once more : the Apostles invest a mere creature with the qualities, and attribute to him the Works

of the great Creator. Nay, which is carrying impiety to the highest degree, if the hypothesis of our opposers be true, they boldly apply to a mere man the sublimest Oracles of the Old Testament ; those oracles which were intended to express in the most emphatical manner the infinite glories of the Most High.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant

VERA X,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

That Christ was the Messiah whom the Jews expected to come according to the prophecies, he himself declared in the most express terms. For when he was in conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, she said to him (John iv. 25), "I know that the Messiah cometh, who is called Christ, when he is come he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he." If Jesus, therefore, was not the Messiah, I maintain that he could not have come from God, or have been in any manner sent by him ; for God is the God of all Truth, and would have had no connexion with him who could utter such a falsehood. Therefore, Jesus Christ is truly and really the Messiah. In the New Testament, Jesus and the Inspired writers most frequently name the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as real distinct persons, and attribute to each what belongs to the "only true God." These texts which prove this are so numerous, that it would be too tedious to quote them : I will therefore simply refer you to John iii, 5 ; Mark xvi. 16 ; Acts ii. 38, 41 ; which are conclusive.

And I assert that the New Testament teaches that Jesus was truly the Son of Mary, and that he took from her, with

our flesh, our human nature complete. That he was the Son of Man,—“a man approved by God” (Acts ii. 22): “The man Christ Jesus, the one Mediator between God and Man” (Tim. ii. 5); that having become man by a miracle, he was a man like to us in all things, “without sin” (Heb. iv. 15). Upon the authority of innumerable other texts, we believe him to be truly God. St. Matthew and St. Luke tell us most explicitly that Joseph was not his father. St. Mark styles him simply the Son of God (Chap. i. 1). St. John says of his birth (John i. 14),—“The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt amongst us, whose glory he saw, as the glory of the only begotten Son of God.” Jesus every where, I repeat, calls God his Father, and is continually called “the Son—the beloved Son—the only begotten Son of God.” He was twice declared to be so by a miraculous voice from heaven, which voice St. Peter assures us he himself heard (2 Peter i. 17, 18). And are we to suppose that Jesus is an anomaly,—a Son differing in nature from his Father!—See St. Paul to the Philippians, c. ii. v. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. In this passage the form of a servant evidently means the nature of man, and therefore the form of God must mean the nature of God. The being in the form of God, when he took the form of man, proves his pre-existence as God. “The bowing of every knee,” &c. &c., expresses the supreme adoration paid to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is “in the glory of God the Father.” In the same glory with God the Father (John xvii. 5), even in that glory which God declared “he would not give to another” (Isa. xlii. 8). “Obedience to the death of the cross” belongs to man, and divine honour and glory belong to God; and since St. Paul attributes these to one and the same Lord Jesus Christ, we believe that he unites in his one and the same person, the two distinct (not mixed or confused) natures of God and man.

LETTER VII.

ON SOCINIANISM.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

REV. SIR,

The language of the Holy Spirit, on the Socinian hypothesis, I assert, is obscure, absurd, and not consistent with piety.

As to the *obscurity* of Scripture, on the principles of the Socinians, it is so apparent, that I need not spend time in proving it: I shall, therefore, only enquire into the occasion of it. The obscurity we find in many passages of Holy Writ, is reducible to one or another of the following heads. Let us now see whether the darkness and difficulties attending those texts, which are controverted between us and our opponents, be referable to any of them.

In many parts of the Scripture there is an obscurity attending, which arises from the nature of the things proposed to us. To this head belong the difficulties with which we meet in those passages of Scripture which relate to the nature of God; the mystery of the incarnation; the decrees of election and reprobation; the satisfaction of Jesus Christ; the eternity of those torments which await the wicked; and all those great and sublime subjects which are incomprehensible by man, except they cease to be what they are, or he cease to be what he is. But we cannot reduce to this principle the obscurity which our adversaries find in the passages before mentioned. For there is not, there cannot be, any great mystery in a creature revealing

the counsel of God. It is no surprising thing for a man to live at the time when the gospel-dispensation commenced, or in the time of John the Baptist ; to be known of God only ; to be appointed to a more glorious ministry than that of the prophets ; or for a man to be made flesh, that is, to partake of a corporeal nature. It was no very wonderful thing, according to the interpretation adopted by our opponents, which Jesus asserted, when he said of himself : " I was, in appointment, before Abraham—I possessed a glory with the Father, before the world was ; because it was determined, in the Divine decree, that I should possess it."

Another cause of obscurity in the Sacred Writings is, the darkness which was brought on our minds by the first grand apostacy. " If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost ; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not. The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them." We should, therefore, examine ourselves, and see whether the obscurity of which we complain, springs from our own depravity. It might, indeed be justly suspected to arise from this quarter in reference to the controverted texts, if we were the persons who found them obscure ; but as it is chiefly our opposers, they ought to acknowledge the obscurity. For in our sense, the object is sublime and mysterious, but the language plain and familiar ; in theirs, the object is well proportioned to our capacities, but the language is obscure and perplexed. Further—let common sense judge whether we or our adversaries are the persons who are chargeable with a secret desire of giving an unnatural turn to these passages, in favour of our own opinion ; and with acting under the influence of evil passions, in finding out entirely new and very extraordinary senses ? What mistake, what irregularity can there be in supposing

that these expressions, "In the beginning," are to be understood in a general sense? Or that these: "The Word was God;" include something more exalted and more Divine than the glory of a mere servant? Or that these words: "By him all things were made, and without him was not any thing made that was made;" signify something more than preaching the Gospel, reforming the world, and the effects which followed? Or that these: "Before Abraham was, I am;" include an assertion and commendation of personal excellence, which do not agree to the meanest of rational creatures? Who, I ask, is able to fix and to prove a charge of mistake upon us, or of any extravagance, for thus thinking of such passages as these?

Again: the genius of the original tongues, which, in some cases is very different from ours, is another cause of obscurity. It is granted, however, that this is not the source of those difficulties with which we meet, in the passages disputed between us. The genius of the sacred language is far from leading us to invest a mere creature with the most glorious characteristics of the Creator. To this it is quite averse. Other languages have something heathenish and impious in them. They do not scruple to use the terms adorable, divine, sacrifice, incense, eternity, and supreme good, when speaking of a creature. But the language of inspiration, being the language of God, never prostitutes terms of such sacred significancy to little or base purposes, it is always sober, religious, and consistent with itself. The penman of Scripture, it is true, sometimes use hyperboles; but never such as can impair the glory of God.

Further: the Scripture is obscure in reference to events which are yet in the womb of futurity. Great perspicuity in prophecy, might impede the accomplishment of it. Nobody wonders, for instance, that things should be involved

in enigmatical figures in the visions of Ezekiel, so as to render his discourses obscure, because they are the secrets of futurity. But in the expressions before us there is no prophecy. They in general refer to the times past. Such as, "Before Abraham was, I am." "In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God. The Word was God." The obscurity, therefore, of which our opponents complain cannot arise from this source.

Once more: a false philosophy, or a misapplication of that which is true, is another occasion of obscurity in many passages of Scripture. Various texts in the Old and in the New Testament, though clear in themselves, have been much obscured by scholastic and philosophical comments. Yet this cannot be the source of those difficulties which our adversaries find in the passages controverted between them and us. For the question is not about any obscurity in the words of the Holy Spirit, as explained according to *our* sentiments; but as interpreted according to *theirs*. And they pretend that their hypothesis is quite free from the cloudy and embarrassing subtleties of the schools; yet, it is on their principles that these passages are so exceedingly difficult and obscure.

This, then, is an obscurity which has none of those causes that are common to difficult passages of Scripture; which is very surprising. But this surprise will increase when it be considered, that as the obscurity has not its cause in us, nor can be reasonably ascribed to us, it must be attributed to God. But if He be the only cause, it will be impossible for us to account for it with honour to his character. For his design in it could not be to glorify himself. Because an obscurity in his Revelation, which leads us to believe that Jesus, a mere man, is God; that he created the world; and is invested with the essential glories of the Supreme

Being, cannot possibly tend to the honour of God.—Nor could his design be to illuminate the minds of men. For how should an obscurity enlighten the mind? Besides, was there no other way of communicating heavenly light, without exposing mankind to the danger of so baneful an error? Nor was it to *try our faith*. For though the greatness of the objects revealed in the Bible, and the contrariety which is in them to our natural prejudices, may serve to exercise our faith; yet it does appear that ambiguous and obscure expressions, if employed to represent those objects, could not answer any such purpose. And though the Holy Spirit had intended to put our faith to the trial, he certainly would have been very far from doing it in such a way, as had a natural tendency to injure the glory of God and hazard our salvation, by suggesting such ideas as opened a door to blasphemy and idolatry. If, notwithstanding, the spirit of inspiration really designed that the passages in question should be understood in the sense of our adversaries, he has been greatly disappointed; for there have been comparatively few that have so considered them, or whose faith has been so exercised by them.

The hypothesis of our opponents not only renders the language of Scripture obscure, but also false and deceitful. A discourse is generally considered as false, when those ideas which common consent and custom have affixed to the terms of which it consists are not found to be true, even though the speaker or writer should annex, mentally, a signification to each word, so as to render the whole consistent with fact. For equivocations and latent reservations are a species of lies, though in the sense of those that make them, they may be real truths. Now it is demonstrable, that the sentiments of our opposers render the language of Scripture deceitful. For if it be lawful to give the sacred

Records a sense that is remote from the ordinary signification of terms which are used, there is no opinion so absurd, no doctrine so monstrous, but may be easily established by the Bible.

Rev. Sir, admitting the lawfulness of such a procedure, it would be no hard matter for me to prove, that the true God had no hand in the work of the creation; nay, that there is no mention of any such thing in the ancient oracles. Even such a sentiment, horrid as it is, I could maintain without offering greater violence to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, than our adversaries do to those of the New. I would assert, that he who created the heavens and the earth was an Angel, the minister of Jehovah; one who is not God by nature, but merely by office. If reminded of the Names given him in Scripture, I would answer with the Socinians: He bears them only as he is the minister and representative of the Most High. The epithet, Almighty, which is sometimes given him, would not much embarrass me. I should say, this Angel does all things in our lower world by the will of the Great Supreme, who has committed the administration of its government to him; but there are other worlds, ad infinitum, which do not in the least come under his controul. And though he is called "the searcher of hearts," yet he bears the august character only because the Most High God reveals to him every thing that passes in the soul. He is indeed said to have "created all things," but these words are to be understood with great limitation: not of all things without exception, but only of such as respect us, or belong to this visible world. He was, I confess, worshipped; and worship has been considered as an honour peculiar to the true God: but there is a very important distinction which is here to be made between supreme and subordinate worship. And should it be said,

this dependence of the angel, who is called God, upon the Supreme Being, is no where mentioned in Scripture, I should soon produce instances to the contrary. As for example: "The Lord rained upon Sodom—brimstone and fire, from the Lord." And those words to Abraham, spoken by him who is called God: "Now I know that thou fearest God." And so when the God of Israel is represented as the greatest "among the gods," may we not consider him as the greatest among the angels, to whom the Infinite Supreme has committed the government of several parts of the universe? which would imply, that the God of Israel is not the Supreme God. In vain would it be objected, that the God of Israel is the creator of heaven and earth; and that the act of creating supposes an infinite power, which cannot belong to any but the Most High. For our adversaries furnish me with a solution of this difficulty, by shewing that the Hebrew word does not always signify, to produce out of nothing; but to merely produce and sometimes to fashion, to dispose. If it were objected, the God of Israel speaks as the true God when he says: "I will not give my glory to another;" it might be answered, the Angel who has received the government of this world has a glory peculiar to himself, exclusive of other intelligences, and possesses this glory in opposition to idols, which are vanity. It might be further supposed, that the true God has granted him the power of communicating to another so much of his empire as he pleases; and, therefore, he could impart it to Jesus Christ, as the true God did to him.

An eminent Protestant Divine truly says: "I leave our adversaries to judge, whether it would be easy to force me in these entrenchments which they have prepared; and to consider of what vast importance it is, never to deprive the terms of Scripture of their natural signification. Because

if we once take the liberty of affixing new ideas to the words, God, worship, and such like expressions, we destroy all certainty in the analogy of faith and in the sacred Scripture, and abandon ourselves to perpetual scepticism.*"

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERAX,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

I reply to your difficulty as follows, by shewing that the Cerinthians, or Jewish Unitarians, were declared to be Seducers and anti-Christ, and all communication with them forbidden by St. John (1 Epistle, ii. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23; 2 Epistle, v. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; 1 Epistle, iv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15), on account of their teaching that Jesus was not Christ; and before him by St. Paul, on account of their preaching the necessity of circumcision, and of the observance of the Mosaic Law; and if there were Unitarians before that time, they made no open profession of Unitarianism, but hypocritically concealed their sentiments, which could be the only reason why they were not expelled from the assemblies of Christians.

* Now permit me here to ask, have not my Protestant Brethren acted in the same manner in regard to the Eucharist?—have they not twisted and turned the Scriptures to speak precisely according to their own whims and fancies? It being a certain and an undoubted matter of fact, which the most learned Protestants admit, that the Doctrine of the Real Presence and Transubstantiation was taught and professed by the whole Christian World in the year 1517, when Luther separated himself from the Catholic Church. (Huss and Jerome of Prague believed in Transubstantiation, with the other articles of Catholic Faith, except Communion in both kinds.—See *Bossuet's Var.* vol. ii. p. 172.) I appeal to all honest and conscientious Protestants,

whether this doctrine, which all the great Societies of the East believe with us, and which regards one of the principal mysteries of Religion, may not justly be considered as the Doctrine of Christ, which the Apostles taught the primitive Christians, and which has been handed down through all ages to the present time. The same arguments, therefore, by which Lanfranc, the celebrated Archbishop of Canterbury, obliged Berengarius to abjure his error respecting this mystery, ought equally to convince all sincere Protestants of the present day.

"A Doctrine," said Archbishop Lanfranc, "which has always been received by the whole Church, must undoubtedly be derived from Jesus Christ and his Apostles; now it is certain, that this dogma of the Real Presence has been at all times believed by the universal Church. Ask all the nations of the Earth who make profession of believing in Jesus Christ; inquire whether the Greeks and Latins do not speak the same language respecting this article? They certainly do; and therefore it is fair to conclude, that the Church has never varied in this point. Had she varied, how could there be this general uniformity of Doctrine?"

"If," continued the learned Prelate, "it had been a recent opinion, and but lately introduced in opposition to the ancient Doctrine, surely some period might be assigned which gave birth to such a novelty. By what miracle could the commencement and progress of such an innovation have escaped the notice and researches of all historians? How is it possible, that in all the Churches in the World, we find not a single trace of such an extraordinary change having taken place? Most assuredly a change of this nature must have been noticed; a change so difficult, so surprising, and therefore so well calculated to leave in the minds of the people the most durable impressions."—(*Lanfrancus, Lib. de corpore et Sanguine Christi Domini*, cap. 22. He was Archbishop of Canterbury at the time of William the Conqueror. See also Guitmundus and Algerus on the same subject.)

Erasmus, in his letter to Belthazzar, highly commends these writers, who in the eleventh century had, both by argument and authority, solidly confuted the heresy of Berengarius. Against the Sacramentarians he opposes the same arguments, namely, the Words of Christ, of St. Paul, the authority of the Holy Fathers, the uniform decision of Councils, and the great consent of the Christian world. The same general Principles, here recognised by Erasmus in support of Transubstantiation, you will easily apply to other points of Religious Controversy. I refer you to this interesting letter of Erasmus, to be found in the English translation of Du Pin's "Ecclesiastical History" of the 16th century, p. 306.

St. Augustine says (*De Civ. Dei*, lib. 16, c. 12): "That God permits "several points of the Catholic doctrine to be variously attacked by Heretics, "in order that the Catholics, for their vindication, may be obliged to examine

"them more exactly, to illustrate them more clearly, and to maintain them more vigorously."

Luther was so invincibly struck with the force and simplicity of these words of Jesus Christ, "This is my Body," "This is my Blood," "This Body given for you," "This Blood of the New Testament," "This Blood shed for you," "And for the Remission of Sins," that he was compelled to assert the presence of Christ in the Sacrament, a presence as real, proper, and substantial as Catholics admit. He determined, however, to mix with it something of his own, and this he calls consubstantiation; in other words, he maintained that the substance of the Bread remained together with the Body of Christ, and therefore denied Transubstantiation. In opposition to this notion, Calvin and his party declared, that if the doctrine of the Real Presence was once admitted, Transubstantiation must follow. "Either admit 'our Figure, or their Transubstantiation will follow,'" said Beza against the Lutherans (*vide Bez. de cœna Dom.* p. 16), "for you cannot insist on the 'literal meaning of the words, 'This is my Body,' without plainly establishing Transubstantiation."

The word Transubstantiation was adopted by the Fourth Council of Lateran (A.D. 1215), about 300 years before Luther and Calvin commenced Reformers; but it was in use before that Council, as appears from Peter Blois and Hildebert, who died in 1132.

Luther continued till his death to condemn the symbolical or figurative Presence of the Sacramentarians; employing for that purpose sometimes the shafts of his ridicule, and sometimes the thunder of his vehement declamation and anathemas. In one place Luther says, "That the Devil seemed to have mocked those to whom he suggested a heresy so ridiculous and contrary to Scripture as that of the Zuinglians, who explained away the words of the institution merely in a figurative way." He elsewhere compares these glosses with the following translation of the first words of Scripture: "In principio Deus creavit cœlum et terram.—In the beginning the Cuckoo eat the Sparrow and his feathers."—(*Defen. Verb. Dom.*) Zuinglius professes to have learned his main argument against the Real Presence from a Spirit which appeared to him in the night, but whether it was black or white he did not remember.—(*De Subsidio Eucharistiæ.*) The Calvinistic Protestants admit, no less than Catholics, that the Holy Eucharist is a mystery which surpasses our conception; but the system of Calvin is infinitely more difficult to comprehend than that of the Catholic Church. How that can be "verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper," which is not verily and indeed there, is surely a greater mystery than Transubstantiation; and we may justly say with Dryden, in his *Hind and Panther*:

"The literal sense is hard to flesh and blood,
But nonsense never can be understood."

"They who think this mystery can be wrought without several miracles are more than stupid," says Calvin. "Qui non sentit plura subesse miracula, plus quam stupidus est. Quanquam autem cogitando animus plus valet quam lingua exprimendo, rei tamen magnitudine ille quoque vincitur et obruitur."—(*Inst. L. 4, c. 17, s. 32.*) In fine, Calvin sometimes tells us that it is a mystery which we cannot comprehend, much less explain—that Christ's flesh and blood should come to us from such a distance to be our food; and at other times, that this manducation is only by faith; with many other evasive explanations and apparent contradictions, as Bossuet shews in his *Variations*. (*Var. vol. 1, p. 424.*) Queen Elizabeth was decidedly in favour of the Real Presence, and expressed her opinion in the following verse:

" 'Twas God the Word that spake it;
He took bread and brake it;
And what the Word did make it,
That I believe, and take it."

See the "*Essay for Catholic Communion*," by a Minister of the Church of England.

The liberal and learned Mr. Hallam, after comparing together the three leading systems of the christian world in relation to the Eucharist—that of the Real Presence admitted by the Lutherans, that of the Calvinists, and that of the Catholic Church, makes the following observation:—"It can hardly fail to strike every unprejudiced reader, that as the Romish tenet of Transubstantiation is the best, so that of the Calvinists is the worst imagined of the three."—(*Constitutional History.*) The same writer asserts, "that the Doctrine of Transubstantiation does not, as is vulgarly supposed, contradict the evidence of our sense; since our senses can report nothing as to the unknown Being, which the School men denominate substance, and which alone is the subject of this conversion."—(*Ibid.*)

See the Articles and Liturgy, as they stood in 1548, clearly expressing the Real Presence; in 1552, as clearly denying it; in 1562, leaving it doubtful; and in 1662, apparently rejecting it altogether. Surely Divine Faith must of its own nature be immutable and unchangeable, as the God from whom it emanates: it cannot be subject to the arbitrary and capricious devices of men. It is likewise a received maxim with lawyers, that all Testaments are to be interpreted in the obvious and literal sense of the Testator's words. How absurd is it not, therefore, in my Protestant Brethren, to wrest the clear words of Christ, in making his last will to bear a figurative sense, in opposition to the consentient testimony of the Greek and Latin Church in all ages! Surely if Christ ever expressed himself clearly, it would be on this solemn occasion, when settling a treaty, an alliance, and making his last will and testament, which should ever be couched in the most plain and simple words. Does a wise

man, permit me to ask, on such occasions make use of such unusual figures of speech? Does he say, for instance, that he bequeaths a Diamond, when he intends only to bequeath the figure or representation of a Diamond? See the learned Mr. Johnson's treatise, entitled "The unbloody Sacrifice;" where he shews at large that the Primitive Fathers understood the 6th chapter of St. John as referring to the Blessed Eucharist. As Protestants admit the Fathers of the Church to be the witnesses of the truth, and also generally allow that the Church was pure for the first five centuries, I shall, therefore, give clear and demonstrative evidence of the truth of what is there asserted from the Fathers.

In the Second Age, St. Cyprian says: "The bread which our Lord gave to his disciples being changed, not in shape (outward form), but in nature (substance), by the omnipotency of the word, is made flesh."—(*Sermon de Cena Dom.*) In the Third Age, Origen says: "We eat the bread offered by prayer, made a certain body (the body of Christ).—(*Lib. 8, Cont. Celsum.*) In the same century, Tertullian says: The Bread taken and distributed to his Disciples he made his body.—(*Lib. 4, Cont. Marcion, c. 40.*) In the Fourth Age, St. Ambrose says: "If human benediction could change and convert nature, (he had done so in the person of Moses, by converting a rod into a serpent,) what say we by the Divine consecration, where the very words of our Saviour do work, &c. &c.?—shall not the word of Christ prevail so far as to change the species or nature of the elements?—(*Lib. 4, de Sacram. c. 4: de his qui Myster. c. 2.*)

In the same century, St. Cyril says: "Once in Cana of Gallilee he changed water into wine, &c.; and shall he not be worthy to be believed, when he has changed wine into his blood?"—(*Cateches. Mystagog. 1. c. 4.*)

In the same Age, St. Gregory of Nissen says: "Christ, through the dispensation of his grace, enters by his flesh into all the faithful, &c.; and these things he bestows, transelementing (transubstantiating), by virtue of his blessing, the things which are seen into it."—(*Orat. Catechist. c. 37.*)

In the Fifth Age, St. Augustine says: "They (the rest of the Disciples) did eat the bread which was our Lord himself: he (Judas) did eat the bread of our Lord against our Lord."—(*Tract. 59, in Joan.*) "If it should," says a learned Catholic Divine, "be supposed by any of my readers, from this quotation, that Judas did by no means eat the bread which was our Lord, because he wanted true faith; therefore no man receives the body of Christ in the Sacrament by the mouth, but by faith only, I answer, Judas had before, at least, if not in this place, received the bread which was our Lord himself according to St. Augustine: 'Our Lord,' says he, 'suffers Judas, a devil, a thief, he that sold him,—he permits him to receive with the innocent disciples that which the faithful know to be our price.'"—(*L. 5, de Baptism 5, 8.*) When he says, that Judas eat the bread of our Lord against our Lord, it is probable

he there does not speak of the Sacrament, (though Judas had eaten that also against our Lord, because unworthily to his own damnation,) but rather of the dipped sop which Judas is said to eat against our Lord, because he then renewed his intention of betraying him; so that the devil entered into him, and he went forth immediately to perform his treasonable act. "Judas did not then," as St. Augustine says, "receive the body of our Lord, as some persons imagine who read negligently; for we must understand, that our Lord had already given the Sacrament of his body to them where Judas likewise was."—(*Tract. 62, in Joan.*) The first Council of Nice defined, (the Church of England acknowledges the first four General Councils,) "that the Lamb of God is placed on the Sacred Table, and to be unbloodily sacrificed by the priests; and that in receiving this Sacred Body and Blood, we must believe them to be signs of our Resurrection."—(*L. 3, de Cret. de divina mensa, an. 325.*) It defined also, "that Deacons, who have no power to offer sacrifice, ought not to give the body and blood of Christ to priests, who have that power."—(*Can. 14.*) The Council of Lateran, under Innocent the Third, defined, "that the bread by divine power is transubstantiated into the body, and the wine into the blood of Christ."—(*Ca. 1, A.D. 1215.*) See Verax's Reply to Dr. Hook of Leeds' Sermon, entitled "*The Novelties of Romanism*,"—price 1s.; in which all Dr. Hook's gross and infamous calumnies against the Catholic Church are exposed, and Transubstantiation demonstratively shewn ever to have been the Doctrine of the Universal Church. The Council of Florence defined, "that by the words of consecration the substance of the bread is converted into the body of Christ, and the substance of the wine into his blood."—(*Decet. sup. union. iacobinorum, et Arminorum. anno 1439.*)

I implore you to ponder well on the words of the great Saint Augustine; addressing the Donatists, he says: "You are with us in Baptism, in the Creed, and in the other Sacraments of the Lord; but in the Spirit of Unity, in the Bond of Peace, and finally in the Catholic Church, you are not with us."—(*Ep. 48.*)* In fine, we have exactly the same authority for the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament, and for Transubstantiation, as we have for the authenticity of the Scriptures, viz.—the authority of the Church, "the Ground and Pillar of Truth." In the second century, St. Irenæus says: "Where the Church is, there is the Spirit; and where the Spirit is, there is all Grace."—(*L. 3, c. 49.*) Tertullian says: "There is no good got by disputing out of texts of Scripture, but either to make a man sick or mad."—(*De Præscript. c. 19.*) I conclude this note by referring you to the Decree of the Council of Basil, shewing that the Catholic Church is enriched with such great privileges

* "Nobiscum autem estis in baptismo, in symbolo, in cæteris dominicis sacramentis. In spiritu autem unitatis et vinculo pacis, in ipsa denique catholica ecclesia, nobiscum non estis."—(*St. August. Ep. 48.*)

by Christ our Saviour, &c. that we firmly believe she cannot err in those things which are necessary to salvation.—A.D. 1431. *Respons. de autoritate concilii generalis.*

The learned Protestant Dr. Grabe declares, "that it is certain that Irenæus and all the Fathers, either contemporary with the Apostles or their immediate successors, whose writings are still extant, considered the Blessed Eucharist to be the sacrifice of the New Law, and offered Bread and Wine on the altar, as sacred oblations to God the Father; and that this was not the private opinion of any particular Church or Teacher, but the public doctrine and practice of the Universal Church, which she received from the Apostles, and they from Christ, is especially shewn in this place by Irenæus, and before him Cyprestin the martyr, and Clement of Rome."—(*Nota in Irenæum*, p. 323.)

LETTER VIII.

ON ARIANISM.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

REV SIR,

I assert that the Arian hypothesis is equally indefensible. On a superficial survey of the Arian system, it seems much more plausible than that of Socinus, because it preserves entire the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, which is a doctrine most expressly and repeatedly mentioned in the New Testament; and, indeed, were we to stop here, the former would undoubtedly have the advantage. But when we more closely consider the subject, we find that the Socinian hypothesis is free from several capital difficulties which attend that of the Arians, those ancient enemies to the cause of truth and the Divinity of Jesus Christ. This will appear if the following things be considered.

The term God, must necessarily be understood either as a name of Office, or of Nature; as denoting external qualities and trusts, or intrinsic excellence and essential perfections. The Arians, therefore, cannot defend themselves when they are urged with the consideration of the name God, which is given to Jesus Christ, by saying: "It is a name of office, and Christ only bears it as an ambassador of the Most High;" which is the evasion of the Socinians. For as the disciples of Arius confess that Christ existed, not only before his appearance in the world, but also before the creation, they cannot deny but he was, in some sense, God before the formation of the universe. Those passages of Scripture which they explain of his pre-existence, are very express in this respect. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." But if they allow that the Word was with God in the beginning, and that he was God before the formation of the world, they ought also to grant that he was "in the form of God;" that he is "the true God; the mighty God; the great God; God blessed for ever." For there is no more reason to allow the one, than there is to acknowledge the other.

But, as they deny this consequence, they will permit me to ask, how the names and praises which are appropriated to the Great Supreme, can belong to Christ in his first estate, in which he neither represented God, nor acted in his name, nor was his ambassador to men? For if he were a mere creature, however exalted and glorious, it could not be lawful to express his essence and attributes by the name God. Can it be said, without impiety, of the most excellent creature, "He exists in the form of God, and thinks it not robbery to be equal with God?" Though the Logos, in his pre-existent state, possessed a Divine glory in comparison with us, can we, on the Arian hypothesis, attribute

a Divine glory to him when considered as being with God? What, must he bear the name of that incomprehensible Being, who is infinitely more exalted above him, than the most excellent creature is above the meanest insect, or the smallest atom! Instead, therefore, of saying, "He was in the form of God" before he humbled himself, we must affirm, that he was always in the form of a servant, in the form of a creature; and that much more in heaven, than when upon earth; much more *before* the creation of the world, than when he conversed with men. For with what perfections soever a creature may be endued, it is much more in the form of a servant, when in the immediate presence of God, than when among men. Instead, therefore, of the sacred writers informing us that Christ in his first estate, and when with his Father, was God, they should have said, that he was then comparatively nothing. As a Nobleman, whose grandeur is very considerable when in a country village, loses much of his splendour when at the King's Court and in the royal presence.

Again: Jesus Christ, considered in his first estate, and as with God, bears the name God, either because he is God, or because he acts as God, or because he represents God. Not the first; for, on the Arian principles, he is a creature; and, therefore, how excellent soever he be, he cannot, without falsehood, be described by a name consecrated to the Creator. Nor the second; for in his first state, before the creation, he did not act at all; or, if it were supposed that he did, it was only as the minister of God, and consequently he ought not to bear a name appropriated to the first cause. Nor can it be the last; for he could not represent God to the inhabitants of the heavenly world before they had an existence. Nor, when the angels were formed, had they any need of such a representation. For they see God face to face; that is, as much as is necessary to the plenitude of

their holiness, happiness, and glory. Nor could he represent him to men; for at the time supposed, they were not created. Besides, why, in order to represent God, must he bear his name? May not a superior be represented without the person bearing his peculiar character? Here the Arians are greatly embarrassed; which embarrassment is much increased by considering that Jesus bears the name God, with distinguishing and sublime epithets. For he is called the True God; the Mighty God; the Great God; and God Blessed For Ever.

Rev. Sir, another difficulty attending the Arian hypothesis is this: they cannot explain those passages of Scripture which assert that Christ "made the world;" that he "created all things, visible and invisible;" that he "laid the foundations of the earth, and that the heavens are the works of his hands; and that he upholds all things by the word of his power;" they cannot, I say, explain these and similar passages without contradicting themselves, by acknowledging his Divinity, properly so called, after they have denied it, or without running on the most evident absurdities. For as they understand those passages literally which declare that God "made all things by Jesus Christ," and that "without him was not any thing made that was made," they are obliged to attribute to him the creation of heaven and earth with all their inhabitants. It therefore necessarily follows, that the Word either made all things by his own power, as the sun enlightens the earth by his beams, or, having no inherent power for such a work, was the mere instrument by which the infinite power of God exerted itself; as the Apostles, who had no power of their own by which to work miracles, were only instruments in the hand of Omnipotence, to control the course of nature, and to astonish and bless the world. If the latter, we have reason to complain of being deceived by the language of

Scripture, which says expressly: "All things were made by him." How unaccountable it is, that he should be called God, if he be only the instrument by which Divine power and wisdom display themselves! And considering the care which the Apostles take to guard against a supposition that they wrought miracles by their own power, we cannot but think it exceeding strange, and as tending greatly to mislead our conceptions in matters of the highest importance to the glory of God and the salvation of men, that they are not equally careful to inform us, that it was not by his own power that Jesus formed the universe, and wrought his wonderful works. But, so far from it, they repeatedly declare, that their Divine Master is he "by whom and for whom all things are;" that he "laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of his hands;" that he "created all things visible and invisible," from the loftiest angel that surrounds the throne, to the meanest worm that crawls in the dust. Now these and such like expressions, it must be acknowledged, are very extravagant, if Jesus contributed no more to the production of the universe than the Apostles did to the miracles wrought by their instrumentality. But if it be said: "Jesus formed the creatures by his own power, which he received from the Supreme Being;" then it follows, that the Father communicated to him the power of creating. But that is an infinite power; for it surmounts the infinite distance which is between being and nothing. Now infinite power is an infinite perfection; and it is manifest, that an infinite perfection cannot be communicated to a creature which is and must be finite in its powers and capacities. The supposition of the contrary is absurd, as it involves a contradiction: because it implies that such a creature is both finite and infinite.

Again: if Jesus Christ, being only an exalted creature,

did create all things, he must be considered either as an instrumental cause, or as the principal cause. Not the former—for no instrument can act but where there is an object, and such an one to which it is in some measure proportioned. But in the work of creation, there is no object on which to act; the work itself producing the object. If the latter, he is the Creator; he possesses an infinite power; he is truly and properly God. For if he be invested with infinite power, why not with unerring wisdom and supreme goodness! why not with every perfection of the Deity.

Further, Rev. Sir, either Jesus Christ acted alone in the creation of all things, or in conjunction with his Father. If the former, why is the formation of the world ever attributed to the Father? If the latter, either he exerted the same or a different power. If the *same*, it was an infinite power; for such is the Father's. If a different power, it was created and finite. But as Omnipotence needs no coadjutor (to will, and to create, being the same with God), so the supposition of a finite power giving existence to the universe, and the idea of a created Creator, are the first born of absurdities. Nothing more offensive, nothing more shocking to common sense, than the thought of a creature creating the world; yet with such inconsistencies is the Arian system attended, and such absurdities do its abettors digest.

Once more: on the Arian hypothesis it is impossible to defend Moses and the Patriarchs from a charge of idolatry, in worshipping as the true God, the angel who appeared to them so often. Because they cannot say with the Socinians: "That this angel was not worshipped on account of his own excellence, but because he represented God; and that detached from his exalted office and ministry, he was not worthy of more honour than any other of those heavenly

intelligences." For this Angel, according to them, was The Word, whom the Evangelist teaches us to consider as existing from the beginning with God, and as being God. So that all the honours he claimed and received from the ancient Patriarchs, must be looked upon as due to his own perfections; and, consequently, we are taught to apply to an angel those oracles which had for their object the eternal God—to apply to the servant, what is peculiar to his Lord; to a subject, what is due only to the sovereign.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERAX,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

It seems from the testimony of St. Jerome, and from the subject matter or contents of St. John's Gospel, which correlative confirms the testimony of St. Jerome, that St. John wrote his Gospel to oppose the spreading doctrines of Cerinthus and the Ebionites, as well as other heretics. I will as concisely as possible, examine in what light St. John looked upon all those who preached doctrines contrary to what he had taught by word of mouth from the beginning, and which he afterwards expressed in his Gospel and other writings; that is, whether he considered and treated them as heretics or not. I refer you, therefore, to his first Epistle, ii. 18. Although he does not mention the Cerinthians or Ebionites by name, yet by these words, v. 22, "Who is a liar but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ; he is anti-Christ that denieth the Father and Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; but he that

acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also." It is quite clear by these words that he speaks of them, for they denied Jesus to be the Christ; "they taught that Jesus was but a mere man; that he was the son of Joseph and Mary; that when he was baptised, the Christ descended from heaven upon him in the form of a dove; and that at his passion the Christ, who was always spiritual and impassible, left him and flew again into heaven; and that it was only Jesus that suffered and rose again."—(*See St. Irenæus, Adv. Hær. lib. 1, c. 25.*)

And in the following verse St. John gives us plainly to understand, that from the beginning of his mission he had taught them the same doctrine concerning the Father and the Son which he now teaches; for he says, v. 24: "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father." Lastly, he tells them the reason why he wrote these things to them, v. 26: "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." See his second Epistle, c. 1, v. 6, 7, we read as follows: "This is love, that we walk after his commandments, this is the commandment ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it, for many seducers are gone out into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, this is a seducer and an anti-Christ. Whosoever revolteth, and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that continueth in the doctrine, the same hath both the Father and Son." And now observe whether he did, or did not, look upon and treat all these deceivers as heretics; he says, v. 10, 11: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil

"deeds." In his first Epistle, c. iv. v. 1, he says: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirit whether they are of God; because many false Prophets are gone into the world." And v. 6, he gives us this rule, whereby to try the Spirits, and to judge whether they are or are not of God: "He that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us; hereby know we the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of error."

From this rule it demonstratively follows, that St. John looked upon all those as true Christians who believed and professed the doctrine taught by himself and those of his communion, and that he looked on all those as not of God, but as false Prophets, anti-Christians, and enemies of Christ, who did not believe and profess the doctrine taught by himself and those of his communion. Wherefore, as St. John taught that Jesus Christ was both God and man, God from all eternity, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made, and man by being made flesh and dwelling amongst us, it will evidently follow, that he looked upon all those as false Prophets and anti-Christ, or anti-Christians, who did not in like manner believe Jesus Christ to be both God and man, but denied either his humanity, his coming in the flesh, or his Divinity, his having existed before, and being the Creator of the world. Thus it appears to me, and I think it must appear to every unbiassed man, that St. John and the true believers of his days, that is, the Disciples of the Apostles, considered the Ebionites as heretics. For although St. John does not mention either the Ebionites, Cerinthians, the Carpocratians, or any of the other Heretics by name, yet he certainly includes them among the number of those he condemns as False Prophets and anti-Christ. For, it strikes me, Rev. Sir, if you wish to try your skill, it will require your utmost exertions to evade the force of the conclusion of the following syllogism, as follows: All those who did not

teach nor believe and profess the same doctrine concerning Christ, as St. John himself taught, believed, and professed, were by him looked on as seducers, anti-Christians, and, consequently, as Heretics.

But the Cerinthians, Carpocratians, and also the Ebionites did not teach, nor believe and profess the same doctrine concerning Christ, as St. John himself taught, believed, and professed.

Therefore, the Cerinthians, Carpocratians, and also the Ebionites, were by St. John looked upon as seducers, anti-Christians, and, consequently, as Heretics.

As this fully proves that he looked on them as Heretics, so I think you cannot doubt for one moment of his treating them as heretics. You acknowledge that the Gnosticks were heretics; you will, therefore, probably say, that they, and they alone, are the persons whom St. John calls by the name of Seducers and anti-Christis. But pray, Rev. Sir, how do you prove that the Gnosticks were looked upon as heretics? and that they were the only persons who were regarded as such before the death of St. John? I know not what definition you may give of heresy; but according to my idea, it is a voluntary and obstinate adherence to some error against a revealed truth. If you give the same definition of it, you will endeavour to prove the Gnosticks to have been heretics, because they, or at least some of them, believed that Jesus Christ did not come really in the flesh, and that he was man only in appearance; which you will say is diametrically contradictory to what is asserted in the very place where St. John describes those whom he calls by the appellation of Seducers and anti-Christis. (See 1 John iv. 3.) But by the very same way of arguing, I can prove that the Ebionites were heretics, seducers, and anti-Christis; because their doctrine is not less contradictory to what is asserted by St. John, and that in one of the places where he himself describes whom he means by those

names of seducers and anti-Christ. For as we learn from St. Irenæus, the Ebionites denied Jesus to be the Christ. Now this is diametrically contradictory to what is said, 1 John ii. 22, and 1 Ep. v. 1: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." Whence, following the example which St. John has set me in the foregoing chapter, v. 2 and 3, I may deduce this consequence, *e contrario*: Therefore whoever denieth that Jesus is the Christ, is not born of God, but is seduced by the spirit of anti-Christ, the spirit of error, which is opposite to the spirit of truth (iv. 6). Wherefore as the Ebionites and the proper Gnosticks stand exactly in the same predicament, as they both taught doctrines diametrically opposite to the doctrine of St. John, you must acknowledge either that St. John looked on the Ebionites as heretics, or that he did not look on the Gnosticks as such.

LETTER IX.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

THE APOSTLES DID NOT APPLY THE ANCIENT ORACLES TO
JESUS CHRIST, BY MERE ALLUSION OR ACCOMMODATION.

REV. SIR,

The Apostles did not apply the ancient oracles to Jesus Christ, by mere allusion or accommodation.

Clearly to discern the importance of the argument which is drawn from that application of the ancient oracles which

the Apostles have made to Jesus Christ, we need only to enquire, whether the Holy Ghost, when speaking by the prophets, designed to characterize Jesus Christ. For, if that were his design, he certainly intended that we should consider him as The Lord; Our God; The Creator Of Heaven And Earth; Jehovah; Jehovah Of Hosts; and The Most High. But if he did not intend to represent the Redeemer by these characters; if they were designed for the true God, in distinction from Jesus Christ, then we must look upon their application to Jesus, by the Apostles, only as an accommodation of the ancient Scriptures to present events, founded on some sort of resemblance between the one and the other. But though such accommodation be not without example in Divine and human language, it has no place here, as may appear from the following considerations.

Some of these passages incontestibly belong to Jesus Christ, by the intention of that spirit who inspired the Prophets. These, therefore, demonstrate that Jesus is invested with the peculiar characters of God's glory, by the intention of the Holy Ghost. Nor will the design of the Apostles in citing and applying the ancient oracles to Jesus Christ, permit us to consider that application as merely by way of allusion or accommodation. For their design is either to prove his Divine mission, or to condemn the unbelief of the Jews, and to remove the scandal of it by shewing that it was foretold; or to declare his infinite excellence, and superiority over all creatures; or to persuade mankind to render him those honours which are his eternal right, by shewing that the Holy Spirit requires they should be addressed to him.

The Apostles adduce these oracles to prove the Divine Mission of Jesus Christ. On this account, Peter, in his discourse to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, at the feast of

Pentecost, cites a prophecy from Joel: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh." This prediction he afterwards applies to Jesus Christ in the following words: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Hence I infer, that the Apostles, designing to prove the Divine mission of their Master from the ancient prophecies, must have lost their reason, if they did not see that they defeated their own intention by applying to Christ such oracles as express the peculiar glory of the Deity, if they had not considered Him as a truly Divine Person, because they could not be ignorant, that the great stumbling-block of the Jews was, "That Jesus had made himself equal with God." Consequently, a small degree of prudence would have been sufficient to shew the Apostles, that every application of ancient prophecy to Jesus Christ, which was in the least adapted to convey an idea of that kind, would be so far from convincing the Jews that he was the Messiah, that it would strengthen their prejudices and harden their hearts against him; and be considered by them as an additional evidence that he was an usurper of the glory of God, and suffered death on the cross as the just reward of his blasphemy. Can it be supposed, then, that the Apostles, who longed for the salvation of their brethren, would lay an invincible bar before them, by making arbitrary allusions and forced accommodations?

Another end intended by the Apostles in applying the prophecies to Jesus Christ, was, to condemn the unbelief of the Jews, and to remove the scandal of it, by shewing that their infidelity and hardness of heart were foretold by the prophets. For this purpose, the Evangelist thus

introduces the following passage from Isaiah: "Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again: He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." Now a design to shew that the unbelief of those who rejected the Messiah had been foretold, required the Apostles to produce such oracles as really and properly respected the time and person of their Messiah; such as were originally intended to be applied to Him, and had been so applied by common tradition. So far were they from being obliged to make allusive applications that were unnatural, or accommodations that were impious, of the peculiar characters of Jehovah, that to have done so would have justified the conduct of the Jews, and rendered their unbelief lawful.

A further design of the Apostles in making such applications to their Divine Master, was, to declare his infinite excellence, to assert his superiority and dominion over all creatures, without exception. This appears from the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But arbitrary allusions and accommodations are by no means suitable to this design. For with what propriety, truth, or honesty, could the author of the Epistle just mentioned, attempt to prove, that the Old Testament speaks greater and nobler things of Jesus Christ, than it does of angels, by passages in which the spirit of inspiration had the former no more in his eye, than he had the latter? If it were a bare accommodation, we need only a turn of thought a little different from his, applying to an angel what he applies to Christ, and we shall, with equal reason, draw conclusions directly opposite.

Once more: the Apostles designed by these applications,

to persuade mankind to render those honors to their Lord, which are his eternal right, by shewing that the Holy Ghost requires they should be addressed to him. In pursuance of this intention, they cite such passages as command adoration to be given to him; and such as declare the purpose of God that it shall be paid. Of which number are the two following: "Let all the Angels of God worship him.—At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow." But, as mere allusions and accommodations have their foundations in those resemblances which our imagination finds between ancient prophecies and present objects, it is absurd to suppose that the Apostles ground the worship of Christ upon them. Were this the case, they would act just like a man who should endeavour to prove, that a private soldier deserves the title of majesty, and ought to be honoured as a prince and a conqueror, because he had met with some actions, or expressions, in the history of Alexander the Great, which might, by way of allusion or accommodation, be applied to him.

Besides, Rev. Sir, such accommodations would be impious and blasphemous, if Jesus Christ were not of the same essence with his Father. For, if out of regard to Christ, you would not dare to accommodate to any man living these words: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" a reverence for the Supreme Being ought still more forcibly to restrain us from applying to Jesus, a mere creature, the peculiar characters of the Great Creator. Because the disproportion in the latter case is infinitely greater than that in the former; and because the character contained in the words of the Baptist, is not so peculiar to Jesus, as those titles are to the Great Supreme, which are found in the ancient Prophets. For, according to our opponents, Christ is in such a manner The Lamb Of God, that another might have been

so as well as he, if the Eternal Sovereign had so; but the Supreme Being is in such a manner Jehovah, Almighty God; The King of Glory; The Creator Of All Things; The Lord Of Hosts; that none can possibly have the glory. If, then, we could not blasphemy apply to any other man, whether by allusion or of accommodation, this one character, The Son Of God, which, though peculiar to Christ, has not to his essence; how much more impious would it apply to Jesus so many grand titles of the Most High, which are not only peculiar to him, but express his essence? In the former case, the honour of a highly beloved of God, is prejudiced; in the latter, the glory of God himself is injured. In that, the only scandal is, lest scandal be given by a profane allusion there would be both scandal and seduction; such as would terminate in idolatry and ruin, by confounding the creature with the Creator.

Our opposers, then, may put their imaginations to stretch, and rack their wits; they may labour to make some books of the Holy Scripture suspected, and to question the manner how the Apostles were inspired, as much as they please; but it will all be to no purpose while it remains a fact, that the Apostles have testified of Christ, whether by way of allusion, or of accommodation; otherwise, those oracles of the Prophets which christen *the true God*. For if Jesus Christ be not a partaker of the Divine essence—if he be a mere creature, to which characters cannot possibly belong—we must count the Apostles as betraying us into idolatry, by impious fictions, and blasphemous applications of the Holy Writings. It necessarily follows, therefore, if the mouth of our adversaries be true, that the prophets did not foretell things as they were to come to pass; and that the

either did not understand the Prophets, or they designed to betray us into error; consequently, that there is no harmony between the Old Testament and the New.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERAX.

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

I am well aware that one of the principal arguments in favour of the Socinian hypothesis, is formed on these words of our Lord, St. John, xvii. 3: "This is Life Eternal, that they might know thee the only True God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent." If our adversaries mean to prove from this passage, that Jesus Christ is not God, they act inconsistently, for they acknowledge that he bears the name in the Holy Scriptures. Nay, if they would hence make it appear that he is not the True God, they contradict themselves, for Socinus expresses himself in the following remarkable words: "It is very false that we should openly declare Jesus Christ is not true God. We profess to say the contrary, and declare that He Is True God, in several of our writings, as well in the Latin, as in the Polish language."—(*Socin. ad Wick.* p. 49.) "Jesus Christ," says Smalcus, "may be called with sovereign right Our God, and the True God; and so he really is." And in another place he assures us, "That Jesus Christ is God in the most Perfect Manner; perfectissimo modo." If, then, Jesus Christ be God, the True God, and God in the most perfect manner; and if this be the sentiments of our opponents, what do they mean by adducing and arguing upon this

passage? Is it their intention to prove, by taking the words in their greatest rigour of signification, that Christ is not the True God, and that the sublime title belongs only to the Father? But this is diametrically opposite to their own declarations.

I know that our opponents labour to persuade us that the term God is not a proper name, but an appellative. For this purpose they have written whole Treatises; nor need we wonder at it. For if it be certain that the emphatical term is the proper name of the Supreme Being, they must be obliged to acknowledge Jesus as a truly Divine Person; because they allow that he is frequently called God, even in such passages as are not supposed to be figurative. They therefore will have it, that the sublime name is an appellative, and that it is frequently given to others besides the great Supreme. Without entering into this dispute, we shall reason with them on their own principles. If, then, the term God be an appellative, we may form the same judgment of it as of the name of king, which is given to Jehovah, by way of excellence, but is also attributed to others. Now I demand of our adversaries, supposing the words of the text were, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only True King, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," whether they would not affirm that the expressions, "only true king," belong to the Father exclusively of the Son? or whether they would allow them to belong to both? They would, I am persuaded, understand the words thus: This is life eternal, to know thee the only true King; thee, Father, with him whom thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ.

Now, as the name of God, on their principles, is no less appellative than the term King, they ought, if they would act consistently, to understand the words of our Lord thus: This is life eternal, that they might know thee to be the

True God; thee, Father, with him whom thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ. The adjective, true, will furnish us with another argument. By the "True God," our opponents understand the Great God, by way of excellence, the Supreme Being. We allow, that the True God is the Great God; and that the Great God is the True God. But we maintain that the idea of True God, and that of Supreme Being, are two ideas which represent the same object in different lights. The former opposes the infinite object to all such as falsely bear the name God. The latter contrasts the same eternal and sovereign object with every other being in the universe; for all creatures are necessarily and infinitely inferior to him; so that though the very same adorable object is signified by these two Divine characters, yet, as they convey distinct ideas, they ought not to be confounded. This, however, our opponents constantly do, when they dispute against us from the text under consideration. It would not avail to say, the term true conveys the idea of excellence; as when it is said, "Constantine was a true emperor—Alexander was a true hero," meaning that the one had all the qualities which an emperor ought to have, and the other was a great hero. For although the adjective, true, is sometimes used to indicate the excellence of the subject intended, yet it more frequently signifies the reality of it. As when it is said, "Henry the Fourth was the true King of France when he fought against the League, after Henry the Third's death." That is, he was then really King; he did not usurp the crown. So in the text before us, the expressions, "only True God," carrying in them a manifest allusion to the multitude of Pagan divinities who falsely bore the name of Gods; the epithet true, must signify the reality, rather than the excellence of Him to whom it is applied. But if so it is very easy to prove that the phrase, "only true God,"

should be referred to the Son as well as to the Father. But perhaps I may be told, that the word only, connected with true God, may give the title an excellence, so as to render it peculiar to the Father. By no means. For as the term only, determines that of true; so the term true, limits that of only. As the adjective true, is opposed to false; so the adverb only, is opposed to many. "Only True God," therefore, stands opposed to the multitude of false gods worshipped by the Heathens.

LETTER X.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT—ABSURDITY OF CON-
SIDERING JESUS ONLY AS MAN.

REV. SIR,

An unanswerable argument for the Divinity of Christ, as it appears to me, may be taken from the doctrine of atonement. Various parts of holy Scripture are full of it; and, indeed, without it the Bible would be one of the most strange and unaccountable books in the world. But, if Christ were no more than a man, this doctrine becomes impossible in the nature of the thing. I conclude, therefore, that our Blessed Saviour is possessed of a nature equal to this undertaking, or, in other words, that he is God over all, blessed for ever. Amen.

This doctrine of satisfaction is the foundation of the Christian religion; that when man had sinned, and was utterly unable to make any satisfaction for his sin, God sent his own Son to take upon him our flesh, and, in the same nature that offended, to make full satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, by his perfect obedience, and the sacrifice of himself upon the cross.

Some say, What need any satisfaction? Might not God forgive without it? It would show greater mercy. But these men consider not, that God is not only just, but he is justice itself, justice in the abstract, he is essential justice; and justice, by its nature, must exact to the utmost farthing; else it were not justice. To remit is mercy, it is not justice. And the attributes of God must not fight and oppose each other: they must all stand infinite and complete. You may say, then, How can God forgive at all? How can infinite mercy and justice stand together?

This question could never have been answered, if God himself had not showed it to us in the wonderful economy of our redemption: for here is his justice satisfied to the least iota, by the perfect obedience and passion of Christ, who is God, in the same human nature that offended. Here is infinite wisdom expressed in this means found out for our salvation; and infinite mercy in affording it to us. Thus all his attributes are satisfied, and filled up to the brim. They contradict not, but exalt each other. His mercy exalts and magnifies his justice; his justice exalts his mercy, and both his infinite wisdom. This is the sum and substance, the Alpha and Omega of the Christian religion. Whoever holds not this doctrine, join not with them, nor bid them God-speed. (*Leslie to Gildon.*)

The sum of what the Scripture reveals about this great truth, commonly called the Satisfaction of Christ, may be reduced to these heads:—1. That Adam, being made up-

right, sinned against God, and all his posterity in him.—(Gen. i. 27; iii. 11; Eccl. vii. 29; Rom. v. 12, 18, 19.)

2. That by this sin of our first parents, all men are brought into a state of apostacy from, and enmity against, God.—(Gen. vi. 5; Ps. li. 5; Rom. iii. 23; viii. 7; Ep. ii. 1; iv. 18; Col. ii. 13.)

3. That in this state all men continue in sin against God, and, of themselves, are not able to do otherwise.”—(Rom. iii. 10-12; vii. 15, 18, 19, 23.)

4. That the justice and holiness of God, as the moral governor of the world, require the punishment of sin.—(Ex. xxxiv. 7; Jos. xxiv. 19; Ps. v. 4, 6; Hab. i. 13; Is. xxxiii. 14; Rom. i. 32; iii. 5, 6; 2 Thess. i. 6; Heb. xii. 29.)

5. That God hath also engaged his veracity and faithfulness not to leave sin unpunished.—(Gen. ii. 17; Deut. xxvii. 26; Gal. iii. 10.)

6. That God, out of his infinite goodness, grace, and love to mankind, sent his only Son to save and deliver them out of this condition.—(Matt. i. 21; John iii. 16, 17; Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 9, 10; 1 Thess. i. 10.)

7. The way in general whereby the Son of God, being incarnate, is to save lost sinners, was by a substitution of himself, in the room of those whom he was to save.—(2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13; Rom. v. 7, 8; viii. 3; 1 Pet. ii. 24; iii. 18.)

This way of saving sinners is variously expressed in Scripture.

1. He offered himself a sacrifice for sin to God.—(Is. liii. 10; John i. 29; Ep. v. 2; Heb. ii. 17; ix. 11, 14.)

2. He redeemed us by paying a price, a ransom for us.—(Mark x. 45; 1 Cor. vi. 20; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Tit. ii. 14; 1 Peter i. 11, 18.)

3. He bare our sins, or the punishment due to them.—(Is. liii. 5, 11; 1 Pet. ii. 24.)

4. He answered the law and the penalty of it.—(Rom. viii. 3; Gal. iii. 13; iv. 4, 5.)

5. He died for sin and sinners, to expiate the one, and instead of the other.—(Rom. iv. 25; v. 10; 1 Cor. xv. 3; 2 Cor. v. 14; 1 Thess. v. 9, 10.)

6. The effect hereof was: 1. That the righteousness of God

was glorified.—(Rom. iii. 25, 26.) 2. The law fulfilled and satisfied.—(Rom. viii. 3; Gal. iii. 13, 14; iv. 5.) 3. God reconciled.—(2 Cor. v. 18, 19; Heb. ii. 17.) 4. Atonement was made for sin, an end made of sin, and peace with God obtained.—(Rom. v. 11; Ep. ii. 14; Dan. ix. 24.) (*See Dr. Owen on the Trinity*, p. 108.)

Another argument for the Divinity of Christ arises from the absurdity of his being no more than man. All the great things spoken of him in Holy Scripture seem incongruous to simple humanity. There is an indecorum in the thing, that a man should be placed at the head of the universe, and all the beings in it made subject unto him. I submit it to your consideration, whether there is not something as absurd in this hypothesis as anything that can be alleged against the doctrine of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, when fairly and candidly explained. One may justly, I think, retort Dr. Priestley's own words, that the hypothesis is "such as no miracles can prove." The position appears to me so highly improbable, as to render the whole Scripture where such doctrines are contained infinitely incredible.

The Socinians have been very unfortunate in the execution of their main design; for they have not purged mystery out of the Scripture, they have only changed its place; they have taken mystery out of the doctrine of the Scripture, where it was venerable, and worthy of the majesty of God, and have placed it in the phrase of the Scripture, where it is opprobrious and repugnant to God's sincerity. (*Young's Sermons*, vol. 2, p. 78.)

Irenæus relates a story (*Book 3, chap. 3*) which he had from his master, Polycarp, that St. John going with some friends at Ephesus to a bath, and finding Cerinthus—("Cerinthus believed that Christ was a mere man, born of Joseph and Mary, but in his baptism a celestial virtue

descended on him in form of a dove, by means whereof he was consecrated by the Holy Spirit, and made Christ." He entertained besides various other errors ;—See Irenæus for the particulars); the arch-heretic having got there before him, he with great abhorrence turned back, crying out, " Let us escape immediately, lest the building fall upon our heads, since Cerinthus, the enemy of God and his truth, is in it." Now, whether this relation be true or false, it incontestably shews in what abhorrence the principles of Cerinthus were held in the time of Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, and in the time of Polycarp, the disciple of St. John ; and, if the story be true, of which there is no solid reason to doubt, we may add, in the time of St. John, the bosom friend and beloved disciple of our Lord.

Another argument for the Divinity of Christ arises from his being so frequently joined with his Father in different parts of the Holy Scripture. I mean in such passages as these: Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ—repeated in most of the Epistles of Paul; James a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ; Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord; To them who are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called. Now, upon the supposition that Christ was no more than a mere good man, exalted by the pleasure of the Father, this seems strange unguarded language. There is an indecency, an impropriety, an unsuitableness in such representations. The Scriptures are calculated to mislead and deceive. You must, however, judge and determine for yourself.

It is an old and true distinction, says Dean Swift, that things may be above our reason without being contrary to it. Of this kind are the power, the nature, and the universal presence of God, with innumerable other points.

How little do those who quarrel with mysteries, know of the commonest actions of nature? The growth of an animal, of a plant, or of the smallest seed, is a mystery to the wisest among men. If an ignorant person were told that a load-stone would draw iron at a distance, he might say, it was a thing contrary to his reason, and he could not believe before he saw it with his eyes. The manner whereby the soul and body are united, and how they are distinguished, is wholly unaccountable to us. We see but one part, and yet we know we consist of two; and this is a mystery we cannot comprehend any more than that of the Trinity. God never did command us to believe, nor his ministers to preach, any doctrine which is contrary to the reason he hath been pleased to endue us with; but, for his own wise ends, has thought fit to conceal from us the nature of the thing he commands, thereby to try our faith and obedience, and increase our dependence upon him. (*Sermons*, p. 24, 26. See also the late John Wesley's *Sermon on the Trinity*, where are some useful reflections.)

Another argument for the Divinity of Christ arises from the necessity of the thing: for if he had not been possessed of a divine nature as well as a human, he could not have been a suitable mediator between God and man. Hence we find several of the most early Fathers of the church reasoning concerning the different natures of the Redeemer in the manner following: There is one Physician, says Ignatius, both fleshly and spiritual, made and not made; God incarnate, true life in death; both of Mary and of God; first passible, then impassible, even Jesus our Lord. Wherefore let no man deceive you. (*Epist. to Ephe.* sect. 7.)

Corruption, says Justin Martyr, being become natural to us, it was necessary that he who would save us, should destroy that which corrupted us. This could not otherwise

be, except what was naturally life was joined to that which was corruptible, to vanquish corruption; and for the future preserve that immortal which was obnoxious to it. It was therefore necessary, that the word should be embodied, to free us from the death of our natural corruption. (*Grabe's Specil.* vol. 1, cent. 2, p. 172.)

Irenæus, in his learned work, more than once inculcates the same important doctrine. Christ, says he, united man to God. For if man had not conquered the adversary of man, he had not been lawfully conquered. Again, if God had not given salvation, we could not have firmly obtained it. And if man had not been united to God, he could not have been partaker of incorruption. For it behoved the Mediator of God and men, by a proper familiarity with both, to bring them to friendship and unanimity, to present man to God, and to make known God to men. (Lib. 3, cap. 20.)

From the nature of the thing, and from these high authorities, and various others that might be produced (see Iren. Lib. 3, cap. 21; Tertul. De resur. carn. c. 51, 63, and De carn. Christ. Hippol. cont. Noet. sec. 17; Cyp. De idol. Vanit. sec. 6, 7; Novat De Trinit. c. 16, 18; Lac. Lib. 4, c. 13); it may, therefore, be fairly concluded, that if our blessed Saviour is not both divine and human, strictly speaking, he is inadequate to the business of man's salvation.

Dr. Priestly, in defence of the simple humanity of Christ, dwells much upon the expectations of the Jews in our Saviour's time. They expected a mere man for their Messiah, and therefore Christ is no more than a mere man. Now, taking for granted that the supposition is just, (and it may be fairly questioned,) it will not follow that the objection proves any thing to the point in hand. Indeed, it proves too much. We should not attend to what the Jews

did expect, so much as to what they ought to have expected, according to their own prophetic Scriptures. For it is manifest they were ill guides, mistaken in many things, and extremely obstinate in their errors. We may illustrate this by an instance. It is plain from all their history, that they expected a temporal and triumphant Messiah; whereas it is equally plain they ought to have expected a suffering Messiah, their own prophets having clearly foretold his sufferings. After three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.—(Dan. ix. 26.) He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.—(Is. lviii. 5.) The Jews were accordingly often reproved for not expecting a suffering Messiah, and on this account charged with ignorance of the Holy Scriptures. O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?—(Luke xxiv. 25, 26.) These are the words of our Saviour himself to the two disciples going to Emmaus. And at another time he said to the whole body of disciples: These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day.—(Luke xxiv. 44, 46.) St. Peter, the Apostle of the circumcision, made the same declaration to his hearers in the sermon recorded by St. Luke: Those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.—(Acts iii. 18.) And in the same manner, St. Paul addressed the Jews: They that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the

prophets, which are read every Sabbath-day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.—(Acts. xiii. 27.)

From all these considerations, it fully appears, that the arguments against any part of our blessed Saviour's personal or mediatorial character, which are deduced from the ignorance of his countrymen respecting it, are manifestly inconclusive, because it is clear, beyond all contradiction, that they were unacquainted with his real character. None more positive and secure than they in the justness of their opinions; none more awfully mistaken. This consideration ought most certainly to moderate the confidence of flaming zealots of every description, and incline them to contend for what they judge to be the truth with fear and trembling.

Do what you can, says the Socinian, you must either sacrifice the Unity to the Trinity, or the Trinity to the Unity, for they are incompatible. But who says it? Certainly not our Lord, who commands all nations to be baptized into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And if Dr. Priestly says it, then he says it without knowing it; for speaking like a judicious philosopher, he has told us, that probably the Divine Nature, besides being simply unknown to him, most essentially differs from the human in many circumstances, of which he hath no knowledge at all.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERAX,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

Permit me here to ask you, in sober sense, would not a man be justly charged with blasphemy, were he to apply to

St. Peter, for instance, the following names, characters, and works of Jesus Christ,—were he to call him, “The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world—Our King, Prophet, and Priest—The High Priest of our profession, and a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck—The Prince of Peace—Immanuel—The Word—The Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last—The Lion in the Tribe of Judah—The Saviour and Redeemer—The Son of God, his own Son, and his only begotten Son.”—That St. Peter redeemed the Church by his own blood—That he bare our sins in his own body on the tree—That we have redemption through his blood, and are reconciled to God by his death—That there is no name but that of St. Peter, by which we must be saved—That St. Peter is made unto us of God, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption—That St. Peter dwelleth in our hearts by Faith—And that there is no condemnation to them that are in St. Peter.” Were any one thus to speak of this great Apostle, what would the Christian world say of him? They would certainly call him either a madman or a blasphemer. Nor would their indignation against his conduct be much abated, were they to hear him once and again acknowledge, “That Jesus Christ is greater than St. Peter;” for they would boldly tell him, that, by such a declaration, he only contradicted himself, and tacitly confessed his blasphemy. Nor would it avail such a one to say, That the application he makes of the character and attributes, the grace and works of Jesus Christ, to Peter, is only by way of allusion and accommodation; for it would quickly be replied, Such allusions and accommodations are impious, are absolutely unwarrantable, are pregnant with blasphemy. If then an application of the principal characters, attributes, and works of our Lord to St. Peter, would be considered and treated by Christians as abominable

blasphemy, it must be a much higher degree of that malignant crime, to apply the names and titles, the attributes and works, of the Supreme Being to Jesus Christ, if he be not a Divine Person. Nor is it any wonder that the Jews should so consider it; for if the disproportion between Jesus and Peter be great, that which is between Christ and God is inconceivably greater, according to the principles of our opponents; the former being finite, the latter unbounded. Consequently, the blasphemy, in the one case, is infinitely greater than that in the other. Now, as the Apostles foresaw that false teachers would arise in future ages, and were able to describe their heretical doctrines, they could not be ignorant, that vast multitudes, professing Christianity, would so apostatize, as to put Jesus Christ, a mere creature, in the place of God. But if they knew and foresaw these things, ought not a zealous regard for the honour of God, and a tender concern for the souls of men, to have prevented their applying these oracles of the Old Testament, which express the glory of Jehovah in contradiction to that of his creatures, to Jesus Christ? Who then, on the principles of them we oppose, can justify the conduct of the Apostles in so doing? Who can exculpate Jesus himself, by whose command and inspiration they wrote? Who can justly condemn the conduct of the Sanhedrim, who arraigned him for blasphemy, and caused him to end his life on the cross, as an enemy to God and a deceiver of men? Or who can blame the modern Jews for continuing in their infidelity?

But I assert here, without fear of contradiction, that the very heathens, in the primitive age of Christianity, little as they knew about Christians, discovered that they made Christ an object of worship. So says Pliny in writing to Trajan (Lib. 10, Ep. 97): "*Carmen Christo, quasi deo, Soliti essent (i. e. Christiani), dicere secum invicem.*"

Eusebius also (Eccl. Hist. v. 28), in writing against the Artemonites, appeals to the ancient songs of Christians thus : " Whatever Psalms and Hymns were composed by faithful brethren, from the beginning, praise Christ, the Word of God." Can any example of a church in the apostolic age which did not practice this be produced ? Did not our Saviour himself give his disciples a general precept and encouragement to make him the object of prayer ?—" If ye shall ask anything in my name,"—*i. e.* as my disciples, on my account—said he to the Apostles, " I will do it." —(St. John xiv. 13, 14.) They appear to me to have understood this as directing that he should be regarded by them as the special object of prayer. Hence, instead of finding few or no examples of prayer to Christ in the history of the primitive Christians, as exhibited in the New Testament, I find more of this nature than of any other.

LETTER XI.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

ON THOSE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE WHICH EXPRESS THE
IDEA OF DEPENDENCE IN JESUS CHRIST
UPON THE FATHER.

REV. SIR,

As our opponents object, with confidence, all those passages of Scripture which express the idea of DEPENDENCE

DENCE, in Jesus Christ, upon the Father. They, therefore, frequently confront us with those texts which assert, that Christ does "nothing of himself;" that he does "those works which the Father gave him to do;" that "the Son knoweth not the hour of the last judgment;" that "the Father is greater than he;" and that "the Son shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father," at the consummation of all things. On each of these, and on similar passages, they argue against us. But as they make, in reality, but one difficulty, we shall consider them altogether, and give them but one reply.

Here, then, it may be observed, that we frequently meet with such declarations in Scripture, as are, in appearance, directly opposite to these. There we behold our Lord acting according to his own will; acting with a sovereign authority; acting as absolutely independent. "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.—I will, be thou clean.—Thy sins be forgiven thee." There also we are assured, that he is "one with the Father, and equal with God;" that he "knoweth all things, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Now, these passages, with many of a similar kind, appear contradictory to those on which our adversaries argue, but they are not, they cannot be so, in reality; because they were all indited by the same spirit, who is not liable to error and contradiction. Consequently, of two hypothesis, that which makes them clash and renders them irreconcilable must be false; and that which proves their consistency bids fair to be true, and is abundantly preferable. The former, I am firmly persuaded, is the character of the Socinian, the latter of our hypothesis.

By what medium, for instance, will the Socinians shew me, that Christ is equal with his Father, and yet inferior to him? For, according to them, he is inferior, infinitely inferior to the Father by nature. Is he, then,

equal to him by his offices ? Impossible : the supposition is big with absurdity. For, in regard to his offices, he is evidently the Servant of God ; he is not, he cannot, therefore, be equal with him on that account. For a common servant to say, "I am equal to my master," would be insolence ; for a minister of state to assert it, would be a species of high-treason against his sovereign.

With what consistency can our opponents maintain that Christ knows all things, and yet is ignorant of the time fixed for one of the greatest events that ever did, or ever will, take place in the universe ? The distinction between nature and office is of no use here. For knowledge is a property of nature : something, therefore, belonging to the nature of Jesus Christ must be in question. Will they say, "When Peter declares that our Lord knows all things, that he does not speak in the general?" But what is speaking in the general, if not making use of general expressions ? Besides, Peter, from a general principle, draws a particular conclusion. "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." As if he had said, Lord, I love thee ; and thou must know that I love thee ; for thou art not ignorant of any thing. To suppose the Apostle was under a mistake, when he so expressed himself, has no shadow of reason. Because if he were, he uttered blasphemy, by attributing omniscience to Jesus Christ, which belongs only to God ; and because his holy and humble Master would not have rewarded blasphemy by saying—"Feed my sheep."

How can they reconcile those passages which inform us, that Christ does nothing of himself ; that he prayed at the grave of Lazarus ; and that the Father always hears him ; with others which represent him as working miracles by his own will and his own power ? If he be a mere man, or the first-born of creatures, he depends on

God for his existence every moment, and was entirely beholden to the Great Sovereign for every exertion of power in the performance of his miraculous works. But if so, how came he to speak with such an air of Divine authority and of Divine power,—“I will, be thou clean.” Had Moses, or Paul, expressed himself after this manner, he would, undoubtedly, have been guilty of blasphemy. Nor can the distinction between office and nature be of the least service on this occasion.

Nor is their hypothesis any better calculated to reconcile what the Scripture asserts about the perpetuity of our Lord's kingdom, with what it says concerning his delivering of it up to the Father. For as, according to them, he does not reign by nature, but only in virtue of his offices, it does not appear how his kingdom can be eternal. Nay, it necessarily follows that it must come to a period, if his offices do so. The seeming contradictions, therefore, between the different passages, remain in all their force, as to any relief which can be afforded by their hypothesis. If, then, we be able perfectly to reconcile these apparently jarring texts, they must allow that our sentiments have a manifest and great advantage over theirs.*

* The words in St. Mark xiii. 32, are considered very difficult to explain : “Not the Angels, nor the Son, but the Father only.” The Arians objected this place, to shew that Christ, being ignorant of the day of judgment, could not be truly God ; and by the words of St. Matthew, “No one knoweth, but the Father only,” (as they explained them,) the Holy Ghost must be excluded from being the True God. In answer to this difficulty, when it is said, “But the Father only,” it is certain that the eternal Son, and the Holy Ghost, could never be ignorant of the day of judgment ; because, as they are one and the same God, so they must have one and the same nature, the same substance, wisdom, knowledge, and all absolute perfections. 2. It is certain that Jesus Christ knew the day of judgment and all things to come, by a knowledge which he could not but have, because of the union by which his human nature was united to the Divine Person and nature. (See Coloss. ii. 3.) And so to attribute any ignorance to Christ, was the error of these

Though the distinction of nature and office, which is fundamental in their hypothesis, be of no service here; yet ours of two distinct natures in the person of Jesus Christ, which is essential to the system embraced by us, is calculated to answer the important end. Nothing more easy, nothing more natural, than to reconcile one scripture with another, on the foundation of this distinction. For example: Jesus Christ is man, and therefore inferior to the Father; he is God, and therefore equal with the Father. He is man, and therefore ignorant of some things; he is God, and therefore must be omniscient. He is man, and therefore must be dependent on the First Cause; he prays, and is heard. He is God; to act, therefore, he need only to will; for by willing he commands, and by commanding he executes.—“I will, be thou clean.” He is man, and therefore may receive a dominion which is not natural to him: he may also receive it for a certain time; after which, he shall deliver up his delegated kingdom and dominion to the father. He is God, and therefore has an everlasting kingdom, a necessary dominion that shall never have an end.

You will reply, “This distinction of two natures in Christ is a fiction.” But if so, the Scriptures are absolutely irreconcilable. Besides, if we search the volume of inspiration, we shall find this distinction strongly marked and firmly laid. There it is affirmed, that “The Word,” who created all things, “was made Flesh,” and that “God was manifest In The Flesh.” These assertions must imply,

heretics, called Agnoetai. 3. But though Christ, as man, knew the day of judgment, yet this knowledge was not due to him as he was man, or because he was man, but he only knew the day of judgment because he was God, as well as man. 4. It is the common answer of the Fathers, that Christ here speaks to his disciples only as he was the ambassador of his Father; and so he is only to know what he is to make known to men.

that the Divine nature was united to the human in the wonderful Person of Jesus Christ. The same fundamental truth is expressed in the name "Immanuel—God with us."

And if you examine the passages produced against us by our opponents, you may soon perceive, Rev. Sir, that this distinction of natures in our Mediator, is quite consistent with their scope and design. For example: "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I." It is as man that he leaves his disciples; for, in other respects, he engages to continue with them to the end of the world: it is of himself as going away speedily, that he speaks the words; and, consequently, he speaks of himself as man, when he says, "My Father is greater than I." And as to those ideas of dependence which he expresses in other places, the several passages may be easily explained, consistently with the analogy of faith and the Divinity of our Lord, either by the distinction of two natures, or by the office of Mediator, or by that relation which subsists between the Father and the Son. But that peculiar mode of subsistence not being revealed in the Scripture, it would be presumptuous folly in me to attempt an inquiry into it: and I again declare, that I will make no enquiries on this mysterious, profound subject, which are curious and philosophical; for Theology consists In Speaking With The Scriptures, And In Going No Further.

And I am, Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

V E R A X,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

That our Saviour existed before he was born of the Virgin Mary, is an undeniable fact. The Orthodox scheme, which teaches that he was born of the Virgin Mary; the Arian, which supposes he was a glorious Being, superior to the Angels, before he took on him human nature; and the high Socinian hypothesis, which considers Christ as begotten in a supernatural manner by the Holy Ghost, are all encumbered with difficulties inscrutable by the highest powers of human reason. Dr. Priestly, to rid himself of all these encumbrances, at once rejects all the above schemes as equally improbable, and supposes that Christ was begotten of Joseph and the Virgin, so called, according to the common course of procreation; thus, in order to get clear of one difficulty, he involves himself in many. For if Christ did not exist in some capacity or other before he was born in the world, the whole Bible is only calculated to mislead and deceive. Notwithstanding the difficulty of conceiving how this could be, I cannot see how any person can reasonably doubt of it, who is disposed to give the least credit to his own declarations. Indeed,

“I know the learned can with ease

Twist words and meanings as they please;”

but to plain, honest men, I believe, the following clear testimonies from the mouth of him who cannot lie, and who never deceived or misled mankind, will be abundantly satisfactory.—“No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, who is in heaven.”—(St. John iii. 13.) “Nothing can be more unreasonable and groundless than the Socinian interpretation of this passage,—that Christ was taken up into heaven, as Moses of old into the mount, to receive instructions, and then came down again to preach.—

Whereas the plain meaning is, that he was in the beginning with God, before he was made flesh, and came into the world."—(*Clarke on the Trinity*, p. 34.) See Bishop Taylor's *Life of Christ*, p. 13. Tertullian writes to the same purpose :—" You have the Son on Earth, you have the Father in heaven. It is not a separation, but a Divine disposition. Yet you ought to know that God is also within the abysses, and exists everywhere ; but it is by his might and power ; and likewise that the Son is everywhere with him, as not divided from him. In the dispensation, however, the Father would have the Son to dwell on earth, and himself in heaven.—(*Adv. Prax.* c. 23.)

LETTER XII.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

CONSIDERATIONS OFFERED TO YOUR NOTICE TO ESTABLISH
THIS GRAND TRUTH.

REV. SIR,

Having answered some of the principal objections which our opponents advance against us, it is proper we should now inquire, how we may satisfy our own minds as to the difficulties attending the grand truth, which it has been the business of these Letters to establish? And, in order to this, the following considerations are presented to your notice.

Almost every thing in the system of nature, notwithstanding the great improvements in modern philosophy, is attended with difficulties. If you look up to the heavens, you stand astonished at their greatness, and feel yourself incapable of comprehending that immensity which lies beyond those vast spaces which surround us. If you cast your eyes on the earth, you meet with as many mysteries of nature, as there are animals, plants, and creatures inanimate. You meet with insuperable difficulties in explaining the sensation of one, the vegetation of another, and the motion of a third. If you consider material nature in its wide extremes, of immense greatness and invisible minuteness, you are struck with amazement, and imagination is at a stand. If to the consideration of bodies, you take in that of their duration, time will shew you incomprehensible wonders, both in the succession of ages past, and in that which is future. If you turn your thoughts to spiritual essences, every thing surpasses your comprehension. You cannot comprehend either their manner of existing, or their manner of acting. Even the human soul is so great a paradox to itself, that it long since despaired, not only of comprehending, but of knowing itself.

And if so, Rev. Sir, is there any reason to assert, as our adversaries do, that there are no mysteries in Religion? Or have they sufficient ground to refuse their assent to the doctrine of our Lord's eternal Divinity, so clearly revealed in the Bible, because it is attended with such difficulties as are insuperable to the powers of reason? Is it any wonder if the difficulties with which we meet in the Christian religion, and especially those that regard the Divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity, should be found greater, much greater, than those which attend a philosophical inquiry into the system of nature? It would, indeed, be a

wonder if it were not so; because the constitution and capacities of our minds bear some proportion to natural objects, which are created and finite, and are much better qualified to inquire into their causes and properties, their connections and uses, than into those of religion, which are of a spiritual kind, and particularly what relates to the Infinite Godhead. Besides, the Blessed God has not prepared our minds, in the volume of Revelation, for meeting with mysteries in the frame of nature as he has in the objects of religion. He has told us that the mystery of Godliness is Great, and that the things of the gospel are accounted foolishness by the sons of science.

“ But reason, they will say, reason is the principal light, and, in some respects, the principal revelation by which God makes himself known to man. By reason we are led to the Scriptures, and by that noble faculty we are delivered from the blindness of universal scepticism.” Reason, as before observed, prepares the way to faith, by leading us to receive the Scriptures as a Divine Revelation; but when she has put the sacred volume into our hands, and has found the natural import of its language, she either is, or ought to be, silent. She has no right to demand, How can these things be? no right to dictate what the Almighty should reveal, or how he should speak? Nay, there is nothing more reasonable than to hearken to the voice of unerring wisdom and infinite authority with an implicit submission and an unsuspecting reliance.

There are two kinds of knowledge; one of curiosity, the other of practice; and this distinction takes place in all arts and sciences. Thus, for instance, in the art of navigation, we must know what a ship is—which seas are safe, and which dangerous—at what time such a sea is navigable, and when it is not so. This is essential

to the end of navigation; and this I call a knowledge of practice. But it may be inquired, why the sea is salt? What is the reason that such a sea has its flux and reflux more than another? And why such particular winds prevail more in this climate than they do in that? This I call a knowledge of curiosity; and it would be very absurd to fail of reducing the other to practice, because these questions contain such difficulties as are unanswerable. Again: I resolve to eat my common food, and, sometimes, when I have no appetite, because I know that without food my strength and life must fail. But were I to defer taking the necessary refreshment till I knew how the various transmutations are performed, or till I was able to comprehend how the food is turned into chyle, the chyle into blood, and the blood into flesh, all the world would laugh at my folly, while I should suffer the pains of hunger, perhaps the agonies of death, notwithstanding any pretended importance of such inquiries.

In the affairs of morality and divinity, there are also two kinds of knowledge; the one of practice, the other of curiosity. To worship Jesus Christ, I must know that he is God. To put my trust in him, I must look upon him as God; because it is written, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from Jehovah." But it is not necessary that I should know the modus, and the adorable secrets of the hypostatical union. As to what is practical, it is this: To know that Christ is the Son of God, whom all rational creatures are bound to love, obey, and adore—That He created the heavens and the earth, and by Him all things consist—and that He is over all, God blessed for ever. But speculative and metaphysical inquiries into these things belong to a knowledge of curiosity; and are no other than

bold and presumptuous endeavours to penetrate the unsearchables of the Divine Essence, and the Divine Personalities.

God's design in that revelation which he has given, is to make known realities and facts, not the manner of them. So, in the works of creation, he discovers himself as an Almighty Being, whose power produced all things; but he does not answer a multitude of curious questions, devised by men of a speculative turn, relating to the manner in which Divine power produced the universe, and operates in the conservation of all things. In the constitution of the world, and the conduct of Providence, God gives us such a display of his perfections, as challenges our reverence and affection, our obedience and adoration; yet multitudes of insuperable difficulties attend the Divine Administration, from our not being able to comprehend how the holiness, and wisdom, and power of God concur in the permission of the most wicked actions, and in over-ruling them so as to promote some valuable end.

And thus it is in the Divine word, which contains as a doctrine, and reveals as a fact, the incarnation of the Son of God. These Divine declarations, "The Word was made flesh—God was manifest in the flesh," are plain and full to the point, especially if considered in connection with other infallible testimonies. But they do not, nor does the Bible at large, enable us to answer a number of difficult questions, which might be started about the modus of that wonderful fact. Nor, indeed, was this either necessary or practicable. It was not practicable; for as the minds of speculative men are ever teeming with unprofitable questions and perplexing doubts, the volume of Scripture must have been of an immense bulk to have provided solutions for them all. It was not necessary; for to know the modus of the grand reality

would; perhaps, only indulge our curiosity and flatter our pride; whereas our acquaintance with the fact, serves for practice; and it is practice, not the gratification of our curiosity, at which the Holy Spirit aims. Happy would it be, if all teachers of divinity were careful to distinguish between those things which are practical and necessary, and those which are curious and merely speculative. They would be surprised to find by this distinction, that a great part of mankind spend their time in seeking a kind of knowledge which is of little or no use; a kind of knowledge which would neither meliorate their tempers, nor amend their conduct; neither increase their devotion to God, nor promote benevolence to man. They would see that *philosophical* divines lose their way the very first step they take in *searching after* the truths of Salvation; because they spend their time and labour in attempting to grasp incomprehensibles, instead of insisting upon what is plainly revealed.

As they who lived under the legal economy had, in comparison with us, but faint representations of the reality of the incarnation, though agreeable to the plan of Divine wisdom respecting the state of the Church at that time, and had regard to a clearer manifestation of that capital truth under the gospel dispensation; how do we know but our present ignorance of the manner of that mysterious fact, may have a relation to the future life? For the knowledge of the people of God does not only vary according to the difference of the Divine œconomies under which they live, but according to the different state in which they are. A child, for instance, has no reason to be offended, or grieved; because he cannot comprehend how the empires of this world are governed, any more than the ancient Israelites had, because they were not favoured with all the light and grace of the Messiah's kingdom. The condition of men while on

earth, like that of a child in the simile, does not permit them to penetrate the mysteries of religion to that degree, of which the human mind shall be capable in a future state; though even then it will be impossible to "find out the Almighty to perfection."

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant

V E R A X,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

The learned Dr. Price truly says on the text—"Ye know not whence I came, nor whither I go"—"I must think this text as decisive a declaration of Christ's pre-existence by himself as words can well express."—(*Sermons*, p. 132.) Another able writer observes on this subject: "Whether our Saviour had an existence in heaven with God the Father before his Incarnation, I think one may safely rest the decision of this question with a Turk, or an Indian, or any other plain, honest, upright person in the world, who could read our new Testament."—(*Harwood's Socinian Scheme*, p. 13.)

See St. John viii. 23; St. John viii. 38; St. John viii. 42; St. John xiii. 3; St. John xv. 15; St. John xvi. 25-30; from these texts it is most evident that our Saviour's disciples understood him as declaring, that he came down from heaven into the world. It was equally clear that he did not endeavour to correct their wrong apprehensions, which one should naturally suppose he would and ought to have done, if they had really misunderstood his meaning. It follows, therefore, as justly and as forcibly as any con-

clusion in dialectics well can do, that the Disciples understood their Lord and Master in a proper manner, and that he actually was in heaven before he was born of the virgin, and came down thence for the salvation of the world. An excellent writer on these subjects says, "That the Socinian interpretation of St. John i. 1, and Heb. i. 10, or of the texts relating to Christ's pre-existence, is not the mind of Scripture. Yea, one may know it as certainly as that a counter is not the King's coin, or that a monster is not a man."

Dr. Harwood again says: "Were there no intimation in the whole Testament of the pre-existence of Christ, this single text, St. John xvii. 5, would irrefragably demonstrate and establish it. Our Saviour here in a solemn act of devotion, declares to the Almighty, that he had glory with him before the world was, and fervently supplicates that he would be graciously pleased to reinstate him in his former felicity. The language is plain and clear, every word hath great moment and emphasis: 'Glorify thou me with that glory which I enjoyed in thy presence, and near thy person, before the world was.' Upon this single text I lay my finger. Here I posit my system." "Who was with the Father," says St. Ignatius, "before all ages, and appeared at the end of the world."—(*Epist. ad Meg.* sect. 6.) St. Justin Martyr, to the same purpose: "But the Son of the Father, even he who alone is properly called his Son, the Word which was with him before the Creation, because by him he in the beginning made and disposed all things, &c."—(*Apol.* 1.) And again: "But this Being, who was really begotten of the Father, and proceeded from him, did, before all creatures were made, exist with the Father, and the Father conversed with him."—(*Dial. Cum. Tryph.*)

On St. Matthew xviii. 19, 20,* Novation says: "If Christ

* V. 20: "'There am I in the midst of them.' This is understood of such assemblies only as are gathered in the name and authority of Christ, and in the unity of the Church of Christ."—*St. Cyprian, de Unit. Eccl.*

were only a man, how is he present wheresoever he is called upon, since this is not the nature of man, but of God, that he can be present in every place.”—(*Chap.* 14.)

There was a valuable discourse published in the year 1794, entitled, “A Demonstration of the True and Eternal Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ,” in opposition to the attacks of the age, which obtained the gold medal of the Hague Society. It was written by the learned Dutchman, Dr. Dionysius Van De Wynpersse, Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy at Leyden. He divides the whole into twenty-one sections, in which, among other matters, he considers the divine names of Christ, the divine properties, the divine works, and the divine honour. He afterwards considers him as the author of our salvation, and the propitiation of our sins. The 12th section is the relation of Christ to his Church. “It is called a demonstration; and, indeed, so it is, as far as Religious subjects are capable of this kind of evidence. Scripture being judge, it admits of no conclusive answer;” so says a most learned Anglican divine.

LETTER XIII.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

OUR IDEAS PROCEED FROM THREE SOURCES.

REV SIR,

Our ideas proceed from three sources, the senses, reason, and faith; and these are mutually dependent, though their uses and jurisdiction are different. The senses furnish

reason with her materials, and reason furnishes faith with her principles. The senses never rise so high as reason, nor is it proper that reason should rise so high as faith. Reason judges of that which the senses cannot perceive. She tells us, for example, that there is matter between the earth and the heavens, though this matter does not appear. And so it is the province and prerogative of divine faith, to judge of those things which surpass the powers of reason. God asserts, and faith teaches, that "The Word was made flesh;" though reason, of herself, perceives nothing of it; nay, though she strongly objects against it. And why? Because faith is superior to reason, as reason is superior to the senses. As, therefore, it would be vain and absurd for a man to endeavour to discover that by the senses which reason cannot develop, so it is preposterous and arrogant for reason to determine upon those mysterious realities which lie within the province of faith—even of that faith which entirely depends on the Divine testimony, and is altogether directed by it. For as the errors of the senses, which are the first means of knowledge, are corrected by reason, so the mistakes of reason should be rectified by faith. Let reason, then, lead me to faith, as my senses lead me to reason; but let reason be silent when faith speaks, as my senses are silent when reason dictates. For, certainly, if reason convinces me of many truths contrary to what my senses suggest, if it convinces me, for instance, that the sun is bigger than the earth, though my eyes teach me the contrary, faith may teach us a variety of important things, which reason could never discover; and which, when discovered, she cannot comprehend.

Here, perhaps, it may be said: "As the general agreement of men, in assenting to a proposition, is a strong presumptive proof of its truth; so a general reluctance to receive

it, is an equal evidence of its falsehood. The doctrine of the incarnation, consequently, having something in it repugnant to the minds of men in general, ought to be rejected as void of truth." But there is a vast difference between rejecting a principle as contradictory to some known established truth; and finding it naturally incomprehensible. The former is a character of its falsehood; the latter of its sublimity. There are some universal repugnancies of the senses, of the imagination, and of the mind itself, which do not conclude against the reality of their objects. For example: The senses tell those that view from the ground an Egyptian pyramid, that the summit of it is almost like the spire of a steeple, and though all mankind were to see it in that situation, they would universally agree that it terminates in a point; but reason, judging of the distance and proportion of the object, as well as being assisted by experiment, corrects the error, and, notwithstanding this universal language of the senses, convinces you, that the top of the pyramid is a platform capable of holding many men. Human imagination has an aversion, universally, to represent to itself men who, without falling, have their feet diametrically opposite to ours. Yet reason corrects this error, and puts it beyond a doubt, that there are antipodes. The minds of all mankind are naturally shocked at what philosophers and geometricians assert concerning the infinite divisibility of matter; and yet, on enquiry, we cannot but assent to the truth of the strange assertion, notwithstanding this universal repugnancy. May we not then conclude, that though all men found something offensive to them in this proposition, "The Word was made flesh," or, "God was made man," yet faith would have a right to correct this universal repugnancy, as reason does that of the senses and imagination?

Many learned and pious men have laboured hard to find out pertinent similitudes, by which to illustrate a subject which is unsearchably deep and beyond all comparison. Such attempts, however well-intended, cannot fail of proving abortive, and are often injurious to the cause they were designed to serve. These comparisons are not adapted to answer the end, as they speak only to our imagination. Now it is not the imagination, but reason that must be satisfied. For as those emblems, under which I may represent to myself the Divine Being, have but little evidence to convince me of his existence; so the images by which the mystery before us may be represented, have but little force to persuade me of its truth. Besides, these comparisons give occasion to our opponents to examine and expose the disparities which attend them; which must necessarily be both numerous and striking, by reason of the immense disproportion which there is between similitudes taken from finite creatures, and the infinite Creator. On these disparities the enemies of the truth raise imaginary triumphs, and improve them to blind the simple and seduce the ignorant, who do not well understand the design of such comparisons; which was, not the conviction of the mind, but the assistance of the imagination. Another reason why these comparisons appear to us injurious to the cause of truth, is, their being intended to lessen the difficulties attending the grand mystery, by discovering the manner of it, which God has not revealed. This, so far as it is supposed to operate, supersedes the necessity of an unreserved confidence in the Divine testimony, concerning this profoundly mysterious subject; and, in a measure, the end of Revelation itself; which is calculated to humble us, by presenting us with objects which we cannot comprehend, as well as to enlighten us in such things as are necessary to be known.

The only use, Reverend Sir, I would make of such comparisons, is, to discover the difference between intuitive and abstracted knowledge. I call that intuitive, which arises from sight and experience; and that abstracted, which results from reasoning and testimony. For instance; a man, blind from his birth, has only abstracted knowledge of many agreeable and wonderful objects around him, in which persons in common have an intuitive knowledge. Now, supposing you speak to such an one about light and colours; about the brightness of the sun, in his meridian glory, or concerning the vegetable beauties of spring; his ideas of what you mean are all confused. Nay, if you enter into particulars with him, on subjects of this kind, he will consider many things you say, as quite inconsistent one with another. He will not know how, and he will think it impossible for any other person, to reconcile so many apparent contradictions. Whereas, if you mention the several particulars to one who enjoys the blessing of sight, and especially if he have been studious of nature, he understands what you say, and has not the least doubt in the case. The grand reason of this difference is, those things which are incomprehensible, when they are known merely with an abstracted knowledge, appear in a very different light when they are known intuitively; and, frequently, the difficulties we suppose to be in the objects, are in our own minds, and arise from our manner of knowing them.

Hence it appears, that difficulties and seeming contradictions may be found in the most common objects when they are known merely in an abstracted way; and that the supposed inconsistencies vanish so soon as they come to be viewed intuitively. We have, therefore, little reason to be surprised, if when contemplating the mystery of the incar-

nation, difficulties occur and seeming contradictions appear, since, in the present state, our knowledge of it is purely abstracted.

The two following reflections, Reverend Sir, shall conclude this letter. As there are difficulties in almost every subject of inquiry, it is by a comparative view that wise men have always been determined to take one side of a question rather than the other. This is a certain rule of good sense, and should be followed in the case before us. We ought not to reject the doctrine of the incarnation as erroneous because difficulties attend it; nor because very plausible objections have been made against it. It is the fault of young persons, and the character of rash and weak understandings, that are not capable of viewing several objects and their relations at once; to determine questions of importance on the appearance of exaggerated difficulty; or else it is an evidence of a negligent and lazy temper, which will not permit them to examine things maturely.

"We ought here," says an eminent Protestant Divine, "as it is a question of infinite importance, to the glory of God and the salvation of men, to compare arguments with arguments, and difficulties with difficulties, and that with diligence and prayer."* On such an examination

* On this quotation I have a remark to make, and which I cannot bring too often before the public, viz., that if every one be allowed to give their own interpretation to the texts of the Sacred Volume, it must, it cannot but lead to Infidelity. See Verax's Letters to the Rev. Dr. Hook, of Leeds, which demonstratively shew the impossibility of proving the Scriptures except on the authority of the Church, and the absolute necessity of having an infallible tribunal on Earth to decide all points in controversy among Christians, and that this tribunal is the Catholic and Apostolic Church, "the Ground and Pillar of Truth."

The Church is infallible in matters of Faith: St. Matthew xvi. 18; xxviii. 19, 20; St. John xiv. 16, 17-26; xvi. 13; 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15; Isaiah xxxv. 8; liv. 9, 10; lix. 19, 20, 21. But I may be told by my dissenting brethren, that the Church in communion with the See of Rome is no longer what she

it will be found that the most plausible arguments of our adversaries consist either in metaphysical speculations, or in such passages of Scripture as explain themselves, by others, in a very different sense ; whereas, ours are formed on such divine declarations as are clear and express, frequently repeated and closely connected : so that either the obvious and natural meaning of the terms must be utterly rejected, and then the expressions will serve any purpose, or our interpretation must be received. And as to the difficulties, it will appear that the most formidable of those which are started by our opponents, have arisen either from their being incapable of comprehending the mystery, or from the glosses of some whimsical school-men, which we freely give up and heartily despise, as much as our opponents themselves. But the difficulties which we bring against them, arise from a consideration of such things as are absolutely essential to the Scriptures, which are truth, perspicuity, and piety. For without these the Bible is unworthy of God ; destitute of these, whoever attributes it to Him, reproaches his Creator. Difficulties multiply and load their hypothesis, by considering, the analogy of faith—

was, that she has fallen. I will answer them in the words of the great St. Augustine: "Oh insupportable impudence! What! that Holy Church exists no longer? It is truly your case, unhappy children, who no longer live since you have separated yourselves from being among the number of it's children. This Church will exist without you; but you cannot withdraw yourself from it without eternally perishing. How then can it have fallen, for Jesus Christ has promised to be ever with it, even to the end of the world? Truly it is most ridiculous for the sect of one man to appropriate to itself what the Saviour has said, "I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."

This illustrious Saint, I repeat, also declared, "That he would not believe the very Gospels, if the authority of the Catholic Church did not move him so to do."

"Holy Scripture is hard to be understood, and wrested by many to their own destruction" (2 Pet. iii. 16);—"not of private interpretation" (2 Pet. i. 20).

that by which God's love to mankind is most highly recommended—that on which are founded the reality of the atonement by Jesus Christ, and all the merit of his death—and, above all, that which the Apostles, who were inspired and commissioned to reveal and publish the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, have most said, repeated, urged, and upon which they have grounded the practice of worshipping Jesus Christ the Son of God, as over all, God blessed for ever. So that the difficulties which we object are such as affect the Bible as a divine revelation, and Christianity as a divine religion.

Again : though the Socinian interpretation of controverted texts were in some instances the most probable that could be given in opposition to the arguments we form upon them, in defence of our Lord's Divinity ; yet they appear unnatural, far-fetched, and invented merely to serve an hypothesis. So that, as we are not required to interpret the oracles of God by a spirit of divination, nor to decipher unsearchable riddles, we cannot be under any obligation to know, much less to approve, such refined subtilties as are calculated to lower, to obscure, to destroy those sublime ideas which the Scriptures give us of the essential and mediatorial glories of Jesus Christ.

The former of these reflections proves the truth of our principles, the latter shews the safety of them. The one satisfies our minds, the other our consciences.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERAX,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

I beg here to remark in reply to you, that our Saviour was not satisfied with saying to his disciples, that they should see him go up into heaven, but moreover, go up to where he was before; this he said to convince them of his Divinity, and this is a most important point; for that Jesus Christ, as to his Divine nature, existed before he was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I repeat, is a fact so clear, so evident, that a few Scripture texts will render this position undeniable.

1st proof.—St. John vi. 62, Christ says to his Disciples: "Doth this scandalise you? If then you should see the son of man ascend up, where he was before?" Whence I thus argue: Jesus, according to the Scriptures, ascended into heaven. But Jesus Christ declares that "He was there before." He, therefore, was in heaven before he was upon earth; but he was not there according to his human nature, but according to his divine nature; Jesus Christ is, therefore, the true God, or at least existed before he was born of his blessed mother.

2nd proof.—Philip. ii. 6: "Who (Christ) being in the form of God, thought it no robbery himself to be equal to God; but debased himself by taking the form of a servant, being made to the likeness of man, and in shape found as a man." From this passage I thus reason: Christ was "in the form or nature of God, and thought it no robbery himself to be equal to God, before he debased himself, before he took the form of a servant, and was made to the likeness of man;" he was, therefore, true God before he became a servant; he existed, therefore, before he became a servant or man born of the blessed Virgin Mary.

3rd proof.—St. John being about to speak of Christ, takes the exordium of his Gospel from the Eternal origin

of the Divine Word, from its excellence, power, munificence, and overflowing charity towards men; then at the 14th verse, he begins to describe the temporal birth of the Divine Word in the flesh. Here are his words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God;"—behold the heavenly and eternal origin of the Word! "And the Word was God;"—behold his divine essence! "All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made. In him was life;" behold his sovereign creative powers! "He was the True Light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world;"—behold the munificence and excessive charity of the Divine Word towards men! "And the Word was made Flesh;"—behold the human nature taken by the Divine Word! Whence I form this argument: "The Word was made flesh (or man);" the Word was, therefore, before he became man. Again, the Word was in the beginning of the creation of all things, and was with God; he, therefore, as the Word, existed before he took human nature.

4th proof.—St. John viii. 56. Christ says to the Jews: "Abraham, your father, rejoiced that he might see my day; he saw it and was glad. The Jews then said to him, thou art not yet fifty years old; and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesús said to them: Amen, Amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am." Christ was before Abraham; he existed, therefore, prior to his temporal birth.

5th proof.—St. John xvii. 5. Christ thus prays to the Father: "And now glorify thou me, O Father, with thyself, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was;" he existed, therefore, before the creation of the world.

What I have proved in this position respecting the pre-existence of Christ, is of itself sufficient to overthrow Unitarianism. For the pre-existence of Christ as the divine

Word, before the creation of the world, necessarily supposes Eternity. For if nothing respecting duration be conceivable by men but time and eternity, that which existed before the creation of things, must of course be eternal. Having, therefore, shown that Christ existed before time, it necessarily follows, that he must be eternal. That all things were created by Christ, the Arians themselves, the natural ancestors of the Unitarians, but in this respect more pious than their offspring, could not deny; for the Scripture evidence on this head is too irresistible to be denied. But whether we consult indubitable maxims of philosophy, or the oracles of theology, a Being who possesses the creative power, a power essentially implying omnipotence, must be infinite in all kinds of perfections; for creation necessarily supposes an infinite and an unlimited power in the agent, which nothing can resist, and which every thing must obey, "which calls things which are not as things that are." But if the Being which possesses creative power be infinite and omnipotent, and if what is infinite and omnipotent be necessarily infinite in every possible degree of perfection, since one divine attribute cannot be without all the others, it being nothing else than God himself, it follows, that he who is proved to have pre-existed before the creation of the world, and to have created the world, must needs be eternal, and be the true God in the strictest sense of the word. Indeed, if Christ did not exist before he was born of the blessed Virgin Mary, that extraordinary manner in which his coming into the world is expressed is unaccountable, for it necessarily supposes pre-existence, knowledge, and choice, &c.: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus, that being rich, he became poor for our sakes, and through his poverty you might be rich. (2 Cor.) "Who being in the form of God, took the form of a servant, being made to the likeness of men, and in shape found as man." (Philip.

ii. 7.) "For no where does he take hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold." (Heb. ii. 16.) "And we know that the Son of God is come." (1 St. John v. 20.) "For this purpose the Son of God appeared, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 St. John iii. 8.) "I came down from heaven." (St. John vi.), and elsewhere, *passim*.

LETTER XIV.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

IF JESUS CHRIST BE NOT TRUE GOD, THE CHRISTIAN
RELIGION HAS NOT SUFFICIENT CRITERIA TO
DISTINGUISH IT FROM IDOLATRY.

REV. SIR,

If Jesus Christ be not the true God, the Christian Religion has not sufficient criteria by which to distinguish it from idolatry and imposture. For in what does idolatry consist, but in confounding the creature with the Creator? And what is confounding the creature with the Creator, but investing the former with the peculiar honors and essential glory of the latter? Herod was guilty of blasphemy, and the people of idolatry, when he received their impious applause,—“It is the voice of a God, and not of a man;” though they considered him still as a real man. They who cast a grain of incense before an idol, were guilty of idolatry, though they did it with reluctance. One could not

swear by the Emperor's head, without being guilty of the same crime ; though nobody, on that account, could imagine the Emperor to be God. But it would be the height of idolatry to call him God, and to pay him Divine honours, as the Romans did on some occasions. Because idolatry does not only consist in giving to a creature all that is due to the Creator, but in giving anything to the former which belongs to none but the latter. The sacred writers, however, not only ascribe to Jesus Christ a part of what is peculiar to God, but they agree in attributing to him all the most peculiar and essential characteristics of his glory. They ascribe to Jesus Christ the most magnificent of all Divine works : to him they attribute the power and wisdom, the immensity and eternity of God, with other perfections of the Divine nature : they also give him God's titles, names, and glory. How, then, would it be possible to confound the creature with the Creator to a greater degree ?

It may, perhaps, be said,—“ Though the writers of the New Testament speak of Christ as of one that partakes, in some measure, of the glory of the Deity ; yet, that he might not be accused of a design to confound himself with God, he expressly declared, ‘ The Father is greater than I. ’ ”—But this is far from invalidating our argument. A person, for instance, who loves money, who is really a covetous man, and who has bowed all his life at the shrine of Mammon, will readily allow, that God is the chief good, and to be loved above all riches : yet such an acknowledgment will neither acquit him from the charge of covetousness, nor from the guilt of idolatry. A man who should assume the titles and names of God, with a view to be worshipped, would set himself up for an idol, though he were once and again to confess, that God is greater than he. Or, to vary the comparison, a subject who should ascribe to himself all the works of his sovereign ; assume his titles, and call

himself, the true king, the great king, and the lord of the state, whom all around are bound to obey; who should cause himself to be addressed as king, and exact such honours as were never given to any but the real monarch; would certainly be guilty of high treason, though he might have said, once at least, *The King is greater than I*.

Again: Rev. Sir, the Christian religion, according to the Socinian hypothesis, (which, in fact, is Unitarianism,) is not distinguishable from imposture;—is little better than an impious comedy, which is calculated to dishonour God, and deceive mankind. For—shocking to imagine!—Jesus Christ appears in the Church much like an actor on the stage, who takes the names and titles of a king, who attributes to himself his words, and requires his honours, without being really what he pretends to be. Yet with this difference,—a player on the stage, when acting the part of a sovereign, does not pretend that the play is an important reality; nor that the spectators should pay him the honours of royalty after the representation; nor yet that they should be sincerely persuaded he is a king while the play continues: but here, according to the impious genius of the Socinian system, we have a kind of comedy, in which a man calls himself God, the Great God, the Mighty God, and the True God; who requires Divine honours, and, as God, has received them from his most eminent disciples, though he depend on God for his very existence.

That the Christian religion is turned by the Socinian system into an empty appearance and mere show, is evident; for you find in it, a representative God, and a metaphorical sacrifice—an atonement, that is only so in appearance, and an imaginary hell, for the wicked, according to the Socinians, shall be annihilated.

“But the miracles which Jesus Christ wrought were true and real; nor ought they to be compared with the

representations of the stage." This consideration, detached from other things, is of little weight ; for of what worth are miracles performed by one, who attempted to seat himself on the throne of the Deity? If Jesus usurp the glory of God, neither humility, nor justice, nor zeal for God, nor love to men, can be found in him. On this supposition, all his virtues, and all his piety, are obscured and lost : and in their stead we behold pride and ambition, injustice and sacrilege, blasphemy and seduction. For as miracles, accompanied with holiness, are evidently wrought by the spirit of God ; so those works, however amazing, which patronise blasphemy and idolatry, ought ever to be considered as proceeding from the spirit of darkness.

But I shall not further enlarge on this argument, nor any longer defile my paper with such horrid suppositions.—Enough, I persuade myself, has been said to prove into what a dreadful abyss the principles of our adversaries lead. Enough also has been said to evince that the Deity of Jesus Christ is essential to the Christian religion, which is the grand principle I proposed to demonstrate.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERAX,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

"Observe," says St. Augustine, "that when in the creed the name of God the Father is conjoined, it is thereby declared, that he was not first of all a God, and afterwards a Father ; but without any beginning, he is always both God and Father. When thou hearest the word Father,

acknowledge that he hath a Son truly born, as he is called a possessor who possesseth anything, and a governor who governs anything; so God the Father is a term of a secret mystery, whose true Son is the Word."—(*Serm. de Temp.* 181.)

LETTER XV.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

A REPLY TO THE OBJECTION OF THE SUPPOSED
SILENCE OF SCRIPTURE.

REV. SIR,

To the objection from the supposed silence of the Scripture I reply as follows; and in order that I may not be suspected of weakening the arguments of our adversaries, I shall make use of their own words; and if, to avoid prolixity, I contract them a little, their objections will not be the less forcible. The argument, then, which appears to me to be the first in order, and one of the most plausible, is that which they form on the supposed silence of the Scripture, as to the mystery of the incarnation.

"We see," say they, "that those things which are difficult to be believed, yet absolutely necessary to salvation, are very frequently and plainly expressed in the Scriptures. Such, for instance, as the creation of heaven and earth; the care which God takes of human affairs; his know-

ledge of our thoughts; the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life. Various things also of less importance are clearly and distinctly contained in holy writ. For example, 'That Jesus Christ is of the seed of David.' Now, if the incarnation of the Supreme God were a fact, it would be an article of faith absolutely necessary, and at the same time very difficult to be believed. It ought, therefore, to have been very clearly asserted in the Scripture, and so frequently inculcated by the sacred writers, who design to promote and secure our happiness, that none should have any reason to doubt whether it was a part of Divine Revelation. Yet it appears to us that there is no such thing contained in their writings. For the passages, produced by our adversaries to prove the tenet, are of such a nature that they are obliged to draw several consequences from them, before they can infer the incarnation of the Most High God; or, that he was made man. Nor is the doctrine of the incarnation mentioned where it should be, supposing it were true. For, when Matthew and Luke wrote the history of the birth of Christ, and relate a variety of particulars, of much less importance than the incarnation of the Supreme God; how is it possible they should have omitted, should have entirely passed over in silence, that wonderful fact, had it been true? They inform us, that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost; that he was born of a Virgin, in the days of Augustus, and at the town of Bethlehem, with many other particulars. Why, then, should they omit the most important and wonderful thing, and that which was more necessary to be known and believed than any other in the whole narration? Luke has not forgotten the manger, in which the new-born Saviour was laid; yet he has omitted the incarnation of the supreme God, and says nothing about the hypostatical union of the divine and human nature. How came it to pass,

that Mark should forget the whole history of Christ's birth, which should have included the incarnation; and John, whom they will have to speak of it, should pass over it so slightly, and express himself with so much obscurity!—Again: How came the Apostles to make no mention of so important a doctrine, when they preached the gospel, and exhorted men to believe in Jesus Christ, and to induce them so to do, set his majesty before their eyes? Read the first sermon that Peter preached to the people, after he had received the Holy Ghost; the success of which was so great that about three thousand souls believed in Jesus Christ and were baptized. Consider also his second exhortation to the people, and you may see that he makes no mention of the incarnation in either of them. Nor will you find it in any of this Apostle's discourses concerning Christ; whether to the rulers and elders of the people, or to Cornelius, or to others. Paul says nothing of it in the Synagogue at Antioch, in the Areopagus at Athens, nor before Félix and Agrippa at Cesarea. Yet, certainly, he had a very favourable opportunity at Athens, to have explained this mystery, when he talked to the Athenians about "the unknown God."

In answer to this objection, let the following things be considered. It seems very extraordinary that they who have so little regard for the Scripture should improve its very silence into an argument against us. At one time they declare, "Though the Scripture should expressly and repeatedly say, that God was made man, they would not believe it." At another, they argue against us from the supposed silence of that sacred volume. Such conduct is neither candid nor consistent.

This objection proceeds on a very dubious principle. It supposes that those truths which are absolutely necessary to be known, yet very difficult to be believed, are most ex-

pressly and repeatedly mentioned in the Scripture. But if they mean every book, Rev. Sir, of the Scripture, the maxim is false; if the body of the Scripture, the reasoning is useless; for we maintain, that the mystery of the incarnation is expressly and repeatedly contained in the body of the Scripture. The maxim understood in the former sense is so evidently false, that we need no other examples to prove it, than those which are mentioned in the objection. The resurrection of the dead and eternal life, so expressly revealed in the gospel, are neither so clearly nor so frequently mentioned in the Old Testament. On the other hand, the work of Creation and the conduct of Providence, which are so repeatedly and strongly expressed in the Old Testament, are not so frequently found in the New. But must an important and essential truth be contained in all the books of the Scripture, or in every part of the New Testament? This is neither necessary nor possible. It is not necessary—because, as the Holy Spirit has given us for the rule of our faith, not any particular book, but the whole canon of the Scripture, it is quite sufficient if the necessary doctrines be found in the volume of Revelation, though they may not be included in every particular book. Nor is it possible—for in the Bible there are several epistles and books too much contracted to contain all that is necessary to be known, believed, and performed.

The objection supposes, that a truth is not evidently contained in Scripture when it must be inferred by consequences. But here the objector is under a great mistake, as appears from the conduct of our Lord, who proves the immortality of the soul by a passage in the Pentateuch, though that capital truth is not contained in it in express terms, but was only inferred consequentially. The authors of these objections are under an equal mistake when they suppose that these truths,—Jesus Christ was conceived by

the Holy Ghost,—Our Lord was born of a Virgin, are of less importance to be known and believed, than the Doctrine of the Incarnation, had it been true. For supposing the Incarnation to be a greater mystery than the Conception of Christ by the Holy Spirit, yet the latter is no less necessary to be believed than the former. That Jesus Christ came not into the world by ordinary means, is a fact so necessary to be known, that without it we cannot be assured either of the mystery of the Incarnation, or of the benefits of his death. For if the Humanity of Jesus had not been free from original guilt and original depravity, it could neither have been united to the Divine Person of the Son of God, nor have suffered a death capable of expiating the sins of mankind.

But may we not retort, Rev. Sir, upon our adversaries? May not the silence of the Scripture be alleged with equal force against the Conception of Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost, and his birth of a Virgin? Yet these are Truths, essentially necessary truths, by the confession of all the world. Our opponents cannot dispute them any more than we; because the Conception of Christ by the Holy Spirit is the first foundation, according to them, of his august character, THE SON OF GOD. Nor will they deny, that ancient prophecy would have been unfulfilled, if Jesus had not been born of a Virgin.—(Isa. vii. 14.) These truths are also absolutely necessary, although they are difficult to be believed; for there have been few things in the world more surprising, than for a man to be born of a virgin. We may, therefore, put the same question to our opponents, on the Miraculous Conception and Birth of Christ, which they do to us, on the Incarnation. We ask, then, if the Conception of Christ occurred as it is generally supposed, how came it to pass that Mark should pass it over in silence? Why does not John mention it? Why did not

the Apostles always insist on this very momentous and necessary truth, when they laboured to convert sinners to Jesus Christ? Read the first sermon of Peter to the people, after he had received the Holy Spirit; consider also his second discourse, after he had healed the lame man, who lay at the gate of the temple, and you must soon perceive, that he says nothing expressly about the Miraculous Conception and Birth of his Divine Master. The same Apostle speaks afterwards of Jesus, to the rulers and elders of the people, to Cornelius and others, but says not a word of the astonishing Conception and wonderful Birth of his Lord. Nor does Paul say any thing of these astonishing facts, in his discourses in the Synagogue, at Antioch, in the Areopagus at Athens, nor before Felix and Agrippa. And ought we not hence to conclude, that the Miraculous Conception of Jesus is not a Fundamental Article of the Christian faith? Of this our opponents themselves shall judge.

"Yes," they will say, "but Matthew and Luke are not silent on this particular." Granted; nor are all the sacred penmen silent concerning the Incarnation. We produce the express words of the Holy Ghost, who informs us, that Christ is "*Immanuel*—God with us;" that "the mystery of godliness is great, GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH;" and that "the WORD WAS GOD, and WAS MADE FLESH." To what purpose, then, is that enumeration of particular passages, which the authors of this objection have made? If they mean that the Incarnation is not to be found in the Scripture, because it is not contained in the passages to which they refer; we reply, their induction of particulars is imperfect, and cannot warrant their conclusion. For they have cautiously omitted those passages which we produce, in order to prove our sentiments. But if they only intended to collect the occasions on which they suppose it

was proper, for the honour of Jesus Christ, that the inspired writers should have mentioned the Incarnation ; I ask, in our turn, why, on the same occasions, they did not mention his Conception by the Holy Spirit, and his Birth of a Virgin ? For if, according to our principles, the Son of God, by the miracle of his Incarnation, became IMMANUEL ; Jesus Christ, according to theirs, became the SON OF GOD, by the miracle of his Conception.

The perfect holiness of Jesus Christ is a truth essential to the Christian religion, and a doctrine of the last importance to our spiritual comfort. The unerring writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, makes all our consolation depend upon it : " For such an High-Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens : who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's." Yet, if you look into the evangelical history, you will find little, very little, indeed, relating to this capital truth. There, to your amazement, you hear Jesus Christ refusing, to appearance, the epithet *good*, when he says to the young man, " There is none good but one, that is God." You find, indeed, that our Lord says, " I am the light of the world ; " but you must reason well to know, whether he mean the light of holiness, or the light of truth. You hear him saying, " I am meek and lowly in heart ; " but you must learn by inferences, whether his meekness and humility be attended with all other virtues ; and also, whether those virtues reside in him to perfection. You may hear him ask his adversaries with confidence, " Which of you convinceth me of sin ? " and this, I acknowledge, implies that he is not an offender as men generally are ; but yet he does not expressly say, " I am without sin." I conclude, therefore, that it is not necessary the most interesting truths should be contained in the

Scripture in express and formal terms, and that it suffices to infer them by just and reasonable consequences. For though we had not been favoured with the Epistle to the Hebrews; though several passages in other Epistles, expressly to the same point, had never been read by us; and though we had never heard that those words in Isaiah, "He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth," related to Jesus Christ; yet we should have been assured that he was perfectly holy and righteous, both by the analogy of faith, and by a multitude of texts from which we might have inferred the important consequence. Hence also it appears, that there is no necessity for a capital and fundamental truth to be mentioned in every page of the Scripture, nor yet in every book of which that sacred volume consists: for the whole œconomy of salvation, and all our happiness, depend on the consummate holiness of Jesus Christ; and yet you may read a great part of the Bible, and not find it so much as once mentioned.

But more directly to answer this objection, it may be observed, that the sacred writers keep a mysterious silence on some occasions, even on matters of great importance; which silence may be attributed to various causes. Sometimes to the nature of that œconomy under which they wrote: so Moses and the Prophets did not speak so clearly of the life to come as Jesus Christ; because the perspicuity of Revelation, in this respect, was to be a distinguishing character of the Messiah's appearance, and life and immortality were to be revealed by him. Nor was it agreeable to the wisdom of God, that Christ, in his personal ministry, should speak so clearly concerning the spirituality, or so fully concerning the mysteries, of his kingdom, as the Apostles did after his ascension, when led into all the truth by the Holy Spirit. At other times, the Spirit of wisdom makes use of the clearest and easiest things to lead us to

those which are more abstruse and difficult. The great things which the Apostles were called to declare, were facts and doctrines; some of which doctrines were very mysterious. The former were objects of sense; the latter abstract and spiritual. Now it would have been preposterous for them to have recommended matters of fact, by first recommending mysterious doctrines; because the order of nature and reason requires that the latter should be recommended by relating and authenticating the former. If only matters of fact had been necessary to be laid before us, the four Gospels would have comprised the whole of the New Testament; they being the history of such facts as are necessary to our salvation: but as, in the grand scheme of salvation, there are mysterious doctrines, with which it is requisite mankind should be acquainted, the Apostles were inspired to write the other parts of the New Testament, that we might be informed of them. And if so, it is far from being strange that Peter, in his first sermon, after he had received the Holy Ghost, should engage the attention of his auditors by making remarks on that Divine effusion, the effects of which were so sensible and so wonderful, without saying any thing about the incarnation. Nor is it at all amazing, that the same Apostle, after he had healed the poor beggar who lay at the gate of the temple, and perceived the astonishment of the people, should take occasion to speak of our Lord's resurrection, in whose name he wrought the miracle; and that he should insist on the leading circumstances of the life and death of his Divine Master, as being adapted to enlighten their minds and alarm their consciences, to soften their hearts and subdue their pride,—much better adapted to answer these important ends, than a discourse on the mysterious hypostatical union would have been. The same remark may be made on the conduct of Paul on similar occasions.

The silence objected against us is frequently to be ascribed to the marvellous condescension of God, in proportioning his instructions to our capacities. As it is written, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now." And again, "We have many things to say and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing." These assertions, and the reason on which they proceed, shew the propriety of Peter's conduct, and that of other Apostles, when speaking to sinners not yet converted, or to such as had but just received the light of the Gospel;—whom they treat as infants in the grace of God, and the knowledge of Christ, rather than as adults; laying before them the plainest truths, and reserving the more abstruse till a fitter season occurred.

The objection baldly suggests, that the Scripture is entirely silent as to the doctrine of the Incarnation. But this is a great mistake: for we find hardly any remarkable occasion to make it known, but the Holy Spirit improves it for that purpose. Jesus, at his birth, is called "God with us." At his baptism, he is honored in such a manner as cannot agree to a mere creature. In the history of his life and ministry by the Evangelists, the names and attributes, the works and worship of God, are frequently ascribed to him. And the Apostles, in their invaluable writings, act in a similar way, by describing and treating him as the true God.

The objection asserts, that the passages adduced to prove our doctrine are such, that we are obliged to draw several conclusions before they can serve our turn. And what if they were? This would not invalidate the argument formed upon them, provided the conclusions be fairly drawn. But it is a mistake: for the Scripture expressly asserts, that Jesus Christ is "God manifested in the flesh;" that he is "The Word;" that "The Word was God;" and that

"The Word was made flesh." Here we need only take the natural sense of the expressions, without any further reasoning, to find the Incarnation. For the term flesh is taken, either for the body merely, which cannot be the meaning here, because Christ not only assumed a body, but a body united to a spirit; or it signifies sin, but this cannot be intended, because Jesus assumed a holy, not a sinful nature; or it must signify the human nature, and this, undoubtedly, is the sense of the term. The obvious meaning, therefore, of the text is, God was manifest in the human nature. If we must reason, it is only for the sense of the terms; not that we may infer, by consequences, a truth which lay concealed. For these two propositions—God was made man,—God was manifest in the human nature—are perfectly equivalent.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERAX,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

I answer the question you put to me as follows: That so far as Christ is the Immutable God, he cannot change,—i. e. he cannot divest himself of his essential perfections, he cannot cease to be omnipotent, omniscient, &c. But he may veil the brightness of his glories for a time, by assuming to himself a union with the human nature, and making this the organ through which he displays his perfections during the time of His dwelling on earth. Does the Sun cease to shine, are Its Beams extinguished, when an intervening Cloud obscures for a while Its Lustre, or, is the Sun in any measure changed? In reply to all the other questions you

press on me, Rev. Sir, regarding the Trinity, I ask you in return—Because God is omnipotent, does it follow that the omnipotence must be every moment exerted? If not, (and who will refuse assent to this?) then why may he not have veiled his glories for a time in the Incarnate Saviour, and still retain all his essential perfections unchanged? Is it too much to say that he may have done so? I believe that the text in question (Phil. ii. 5, 8) decides that he did.

I approach, however, such a subject with solemn awe, and never feel my own weakness and ignorance more intensely than while endeavouring to think upon it. The familiar, I had almost said irreverential manner, in which some speak and write respecting this Mystery, is calculated, I freely acknowledge, to excite painful emotions. The very last age witnessed a dispute in Germany, between the Theologians of Giessen and Tübingen, whether the humiliation of Christ consisted “in abstinence from both the direct and reflex use of Divine Majesty,” or in the “occultation of Divine Majesty;”—a dispute which agitated the Lutheran Church to the very centre. The Humble Inquirer after truth, who once is brought to see the boundaries of human knowledge, will shrink from disputations of such a nature, and ought to pour forth his earnest supplications to God, that he will grant him his grace in all disputes of this sort, to submit his judgment with humility to the Ever-teaching and Infallible Authority of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, “The Ground and Pillar of Truth.” For our Saviour never promised his Blessed Spirit to each individual, but only to his Church.—(See St. Matthew, xxviii. 19, 20.) No wise lawgiver ever yet gave a Code of Laws to his people, without appointing judges to interpret those laws; therefore, I ask, in the name of common sense, is the Son of God in this respect to act a part which no wise lawgiver ever did or ever could act,—viz. to say to his

People (the greater part of whom are totally uneducated and unable to read), Here is a Code of Laws, which I desire you will strictly follow, under pain of damnation, when he must have been aware that they were generally unequal to the task? "Knowing this first, that no Prophecy of Scripture is of Private Interpretation."—(2 St. Peter i. 20, 21.) Permit me to ask, would conduct like this be just, would it be wise in the Saviour of the world to make the great Truths of Religion the sport of every frantic brain, to make them subject to the whims and fancies of every bewildered mind? oh! surely not—for Wisdom, Rev. Sir, is one of the attributes of God, and as such, he never could act such a part as this. He never could, I assert, place a code of laws, such as the Scriptures are, in the hands of his people, without appointing a judge to interpret them—and this judge is the Church. The illustrious St. Augustine declared, "That he would not believe the very Scriptures, if the Catholic Church did not move him so to do." Origen says, in the third age, "In our understanding the Scriptures, &c. we must not believe otherwise than as the "Church of God hath by succession delivered to us."—(*Præfat. in Lib. Periarth.*) St. Augustine again says, "I know by Divine Revelations, that the Spirit of Truth "teacheth it (the Church) all Truth."—(*L. 4 de Baptism. c. 4.*)

LETTER XVI.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST WAS TAUGHT
BY THE APOSTLES AND EVANGELISTS IN AND BEFORE
THE YEAR 63, AND EVEN FROM THE VERY BEGINNING
OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

REV. SIR,

A very strong presumption against your insinuation, and the assertion of Dr. Priestley, that the primitive Church was Unitarian, is, that it cannot with any appearance of reason be supposed, that the whole body of the Jewish Christians would in the space of sixty-four years, viz., from our Saviour's Ascension to the writing of St. John's Gospel, nay, and in much less time than that, fall from the doctrine taught them by the Apostles, which was manifestly Trinitarian;

The whole body of the Jewish Christians in the beginning of the Church were: 1. The three thousand that were converted to the faith on the very day when the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles. 2. The five thousand who were converted by St. Peter's Sermon, after having cured the lame man in Solomon's porch (Acts iv. 4). And 3. Those who were afterwards daily added to the Church, in consequence of the preaching of the Apostles and other ministers of Christ (Acts ii. 47, and viii. 5). And as it is said of the first three thousand, Acts ii. 42, that "They continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship;" so there is reason to suppose, that the great body of

those who were converted afterwards did the same, especially as some at least of the Apostles still remained with them, teaching and instructing them in the faith of Christ, and daily working innumerable miracles in confirmation of the faith they taught. It is true, heresies soon began to arise, first in the person of Simon Magus, and after him several others opposed the doctrine of the Apostles, and broached new inventions of their own, such as Hymeneus, Philetus (2 Tim. ii. 17), and the Nicolaites (Rev. ii. 15). And though these are the only heretics whose names are recorded in the Scripture, yet there were also some who raised dissensions about the obligation which they pretended was incumbent on the Gentiles converted to the faith, of being circumcised, and keeping the law of Moses, (of which some think Cerinthus to have been the author, whom they also imagine to be the same person as Ebion, he having two different names,) (Acts xv.); others who opposed the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. xv. 12); and others whom St. Paul calls false apostles, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ (2 Cor. xi. 13).

But though these abandoned the faith and communion of the Apostles, yet the great body of the Jewish Christians did not; for if they had, surely St. Paul would not have called them the poor saints which are at Jerusalem (Rom. xv. 26), and so strenuously exhorted the Christians in every place to contribute liberally to their relief, as we find he did (1 Cor. xvi. 2; 3). St. Paul himself says, Tit. iii. 10: "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject." If then they had abandoned the faith and communion of the Apostles, it cannot be reasonably supposed, that he would call them saints, interest himself so much in making great collections for their relief, and profess himself ready to carry that relief to them.

Hence we have every reason to conclude, that though some few fell off, yet the great body of the Jewish converts persevered in the faith and communion of the Apostles, at least till after those collections were carried to them, which seems to have been in or about the year 58. What therefore I have to do, is to prove that before that time the Church was not Unitarian, but Trinitarian; and if I can do this, it will overthrow Dr. Priestley's assertion, that the primitive Church was Unitarian.

If I can prove that the Apostles taught, and that the common people believed, the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, I think this will amount to a proof that the primitive Church was Trinitarian. For the very reason why you deny Jesus Christ to be God, is because you do not believe that in God there are three distinct persons; but you think that as there is but one Divine Nature, so there is also but one Divine Person. Wherefore as you acknowledge the Father to be God, and are persuaded in your own mind that the Primitive Church also believed him to be so, if I prove that the Apostles taught, and the Common People believed, that Jesus Christ was God, I think it will thence demonstratively follow, that the Primitive Church believed that there was a plurality of Persons in God, and consequently I may say, that they believed the Trinitarian doctrine. For although the proving the Divinity of Christ will not, strictly speaking, prove that there are three divine persons, yet as I presume you do not desire that I should now undertake to prove the divinity of the Holy Ghost, I imagine my proving the divinity of Christ alone will be sufficient to answer the purpose of the dispute subsisting between Unitarians and Trinitarians.

Let us now proceed to examine what doctrine the Apostles taught concerning Christ before and in the year 63. At this time, indeed, none of the writings of St. John were

published, and therefore I shall not quote any thing out of them at present. Nor is there any need that I should, since you yourself do not deny that when John published his Gospel, the Divinity of Christ was then clearly taught. The proofs, therefore, I must collect from the other parts of the New Testament. Though I feel confident, that neither yourself nor any of your party will deny, that St. John and the other Apostles all believed and taught one and the same body of doctrine concerning Christ. The Apostles then taught that he was—

1. The Messiah or Christ promised to the patriarchs of old, to be sent in the world, Acts xiii. 32, 33: "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the Fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee."

2. That he was the Son of God, Matt. xvi. 16: "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God."—xxvi. 63: "The high-priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us, whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said it: nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Mark i. 1: The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."—And xiv. 61; St. Luke xxii. 70.

3. That he was God's own, or true and proper Son, Rom. viii. 3: "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh."—And v. 32: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us *all*."

4. That he was the begotten Son of God, Heb. v. 5: "Christ glorified not himself to be made an high-priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I

begotten thee."—And Heb. i. 6: "When he bringeth his first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."

5. That the eternal Father had declared him to be his beloved Son, Mark i. 11: "There came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—And Luke ix. 35.

6. That he was in the form of God, and equal with God, Phil. ii. 6: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

7. That he is the Holy One, Acts xiii. 35: Wherefore he saith:—"Thou shall not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David was laid unto his father, and saw corruption. But he whom God raised again, saw no corruption."

8. That he is the Lord, Luke i. 76: "Thou child shall be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways."—Luke ii. 11: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."—Acts ix. 17: "Ananias said, brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost."

9. That he is the Lord from heaven, 1 Cor. xv. 47: "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven."

10. That he is Lord of all, Acts x. 36: "Jesus Christ he is Lord of all."

11. That he is the Lord of glory, 1 Cor. ii. 8: "Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

12. That he is unchangeable, Heb. i. 12: "Thou art the

same, and thy years shall not fail."—And xiii. 8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

13. That he existed before all things, Colos. i. 17: "He is before all things, and by him all things consist."

14. That he is Omnipresent, or in all places, Matt. xviii. 20: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."—And xxviii. 20: "Teach all nations—and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

15. That he is able to subdue all things to himself, and consequently Almighty, Phil. iii. 21: "Who shall change our vile body—according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself."

16. That he is the *Creator* of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, Colos. i. 16: "By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him."—And Heb. i. 10: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands."

17. That he is the preserver of all things, Colos. i. 17: "By him all things consist."—Heb. i. 3: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, &c."

18. That he is the Judge of the world, 2 Tim. iv. 1: "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead, &c."

19. That he was God, Acts xx. 28: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."—And Rom. ix. 6, he says: "Christ is over all, God blessed for ever."—And Heb. i. 8: "Unto the Son he (the Father) saith, Thy

throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." And here I beg to observe that this Epistle was particularly addressed to the Hebrews.

20. That God commanded his angels to adore him, Heb. i. 6: "Again when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the Angels of God worship him."

This, Rev. Sir, was what the Apostles and Evangelists taught the people concerning Jesus Christ. And to prove what they asserted concerning him, they frequently quoted the books of the Old Testament, which the Hebrew Christians doubtless had in their hands. And if they examined the places quoted, they must have found that this Jesus Christ was therein called by the august name Jehovah. And as there can be no doubt but that the Apostles and Evangelists, from the very beginning of their mission, taught the very same doctrine as is expressed in their writings; it will evidently follow, that this doctrine concerning the person, and the divinity of Christ, was taught by the Apostles, and believed and professed by all their converts, from the very beginning and first establishment of the Christian Church. And consequently this was believed and professed by the whole body, not only of the Gentile, but also of the Jewish Christians; and continued to be so believed and professed by the whole body of Christians, till Simon Magus and others began to fall off from the Church.

You may remark, that there are no other books of the New Testament, except the writings of the four Evangelists, and the Epistles of St. Paul, St. James, St. Jude, and St. Peter. We have no authentic proof that any other books were written by any other of the Apostles. And, partly as you do not deny that St. John taught the

doctrine of the divinity of Christ with clearness, and also as my object at present is to prove this doctrine to have been taught before the year 63, I have not quoted any thing in this letter but from the writings of the three first Evangelists, and the Epistles of St. Paul, all which are known to have been written before that time.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERA X,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

I reply to your letter, just received, as follows, that it is a rule laid down by St. Paul, that God swears by himself, for this reason, because he can swear by no greater (Heb. vi. 13). But Christ has sworn by himself, Isai. xlv. 23: "I have sworn by myself,—that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Which words being compared with Rom. xiv. 10, 11, are proved to be the words of Christ: "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ; for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess unto God." Christ, therefore, has sworn by himself; so that if the Apostle's rule be applied, he must for this reason be God, and there can be no greater.

LETTER XVII.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

THE FAITH OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH WAS NOT ALTERED
OR INFLUENCED BY THE DOCTRINES OF PLATO.

REV. SIR,

You remark, that Dr. Priestley, in his second objection or observation, p. 9, says: "The doctrines of Plato appear to have been in the Christian Church as early as the age of Justin Martyr, who wrote about A.D. 140. From that time almost all the learned Christians imbibed them; and the consequence of this was such a rapid departure from the primitive doctrine, that we could not reasonably expect to find it among such Bishops as were assembled at Nice in 325."

I reply to this, Rev. Sir, that Ecclesiastical history informs us that Justin Martyr was a Platonic philosopher before he embraced the Christian faith. But though he and several others of the Fathers who lived after him seem to have been pleased with the doctrines of Plato, because they approached nearer to the revealed truths than those of the other Philosophers, yet they never looked upon the doctrines of Plato as constituting any part of the faith of the Christian Church. Nor does it follow hence, it being only a surmise of Dr. Priestley's, that "the consequence of this was a rapid departure from the primitive doctrines of Christianity."

For the doctrine of Christ's divinity had been taught long before the time of Justin's conversion, long before the year 140, as I shall have occasion to shew hereafter. For the

present, it is sufficient for me to notice, that Dr. Priestley acknowledges, or, more properly speaking, asserts, p. 82, that "Neither Christ himself, nor any of the Apostles before John, taught his pre-existence or divinity with clearness." He also says again, p. 96: "The Christian Fathers all represent him (St. John) as the first who taught with clearness and effect the doctrines of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ." These words of the Doctor imply, that these doctrines were *clearly* taught when John had published his Gospel, which was about the year 98. The doctrines therefore of Christ's divinity, and of a plurality of persons in God, could not possibly be the effect of any rapid departure from the primitive doctrines of Christianity, in consequence of the introduction of the Platonic Philosophy. For if it were, the effect would have been prior to the existence of its cause; for according to the Doctor himself fixing the period, the Platonic Philosophy did not enter the Church till the time of Justin Martyr, that is, about forty-two years after St. John had published his gospel.

Give me leave, Rev. Sir, now to retort upon what the Doctor says in his letter to the Candidates for Orders, p. 82, and which you seem to cite with delight: "Great changes in opinion are never brought about suddenly, or without circumstances which prove their reality; and since we cannot find the least trace of any change having been produced in the Christian world by the pretended introduction of the doctrines of Plato into the Church; the notion of such a rapid departure from the primitive doctrine, is an improbable hypothesis, though the best that could be thought of to account for a fact, the reality of which you yourself cannot deny, viz., the existence of the belief of the Divinity of Christ in the Christian Church as early as the publication of St. John's Gospel."

I think, Rev. Sir, this retortion will stand its ground; for as you are the warm advocate of Dr. Priestley's opinions, who asserts that, "Great changes in opinion are never brought about suddenly, or without circumstances which prove their reality," and as I deny that the Church ever changed its Faith from Unitarianism to Trinitarianism, I consequently deny that such a change was brought about suddenly. But as you assert that such a change was brought about, it is incumbent on you to mention the circumstances which prove its reality. What you allege, in lieu of those desired circumstances, is that "the doctrines of Plato appear to have been in the Church, about A.D. 140. From that time almost all the learned Christians imbibed them; and the consequence of this was a rapid departure from the primitive doctrine."—This, Rev. Sir, is a mere supposition of your own, and of Dr. Priestley's, but it is no proof. There is not one *circumstance* which proves the reality of such a change. And, moreover, how is it possible that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ should have been introduced into the Church, in consequence of the Fathers, the learned Christians, imbibing the doctrines of Plato, when you yourself, and Dr. Priestley, implicitly acknowledge that the doctrine of Christ's divinity was clearly taught when St. John published his Gospel, which was forty-two years before the doctrines of Plato were imbibed by the learned Christians. You may with as much reason maintain, or suppose, that a child was born before his Father.

But the Doctor says, (p. 15,) "By a distinct exhibition of the doctrines of Platonism, by an abundant proof of their having been adopted by the Christian Fathers, and from the near resemblance between them and the doctrine of the Trinity in the first stage of it, I think I have made it most evident, that it had that origin and no other. No child ever proved its own parent more clearly than this does."

If St. John had not written his Gospel forty-two years, and St. Paul his Epistles to the Philippians and the Hebrews seventy-three years before Platonism was imbibed or adopted by the Christian Fathers, this argument might have had at least some appearance of plausibility. But till you shall have given a reasonable account how those books could be published so long a time before the Platonic doctrines were, as you assert, adopted by the Christian Fathers, it cannot be looked upon as an argument of the least weight. And till that time, all that you can say to persuade us, and all that Dr. Priestley has written, that Platonism was the parent of the doctrine of the Trinity, will be of no effect. We know our Parents too well to be deceived by such a piece of sophistry; and are no more inclined to acknowledge a supposititious father whom you would wish to provide for us, though so great a man as Plato, than a man of honour and virtue would be, to acknowledge or adopt an illegitimate child, if some base woman, who was its Mother, should falsely swear him to be the Father of it. We know that the doctrine of the Trinity was clearly taught by Jesus Christ and his Apostles long before the Platonizing Fathers were born.

When you speak of the influence which the doctrines of Plato had on the minds of the learned Christians, you seem either to have forgotten, or not to have regarded the promise made by Jesus Christ to the Apostles and their Successors, when he said to them, John xiv. 16: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth."—And xvi. 13: "When he the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth."—And xiv. 26: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name. He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto

you." Is it possible that the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, who agreeably to this promise of Christ, has undertaken to be the perpetual guide and director of his Church and its Pastors, could, as you imagine, permit them to *depart* from the primitive doctrines of Christianity? Or do you imagine that the philosophical doctrines and opinions of men are more powerful, and can have more influence over the minds of the true people of God, than the Spirit of Truth? The human mind revolts at such a thought!

These promises of our Saviour, and the completion of them, are exactly conformable to what had been long ago foretold by the prophet Isaiah (lix. 20), who says: "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith Jehovah. As for me this is my covenant with them, saith Jehovah; my spirit that is upon thee, and the words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith Jehovah, from henceforth and for ever." If these words, this promise of Jehovah, be true, how was it possible that there should have been such a rapid departure from the primitive doctrines of Christianity as you pretend? And how could the Church of Christ on Earth ever have required a Reformation in matters appertaining unto Faith, when the Son of God promised ever to be with her, leading and guiding her into all truth?

And I am, Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERA X,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

St. Justin presented two apologies to the Roman Emperors in favour of the Christians, and suffered martyrdom at Rome in the year 167. In that which is called his first apology, he says (p. 11): "We profess indeed that we do not acknowledge the heathen gods; but we worship and adore the Father, the Son who hath come and taught us these things, and the Prophetic Spirit." P. 122: "They who assert the Father and the Son to be the same person, know not the Father; nor do they know that the Father of all things has a Son; who, being the first begotten Word of God, is also God."

In that which is called his second apology, he says (p. 13): "The words Father, God, Creator, Lord, and Master, are titles derived from his works, and the benefits he bestows on his creatures: but his Son, who alone is properly called his Son, the Word, which co-existing with, and was begotten of him before any thing was created, (because by him he created and beautified all things in the beginning,) is called Christ; for this reason, because by him God anointed and beautified all things."

In his dialogue with Tryphon, the Jewish philosopher, he says (*Biblioth. Patr.* Tom. 2, p. 9, Col. 2): "It was foretold, as I have shewn from the Scriptures, that Christ is King, Priest, God, Lord, an Angel, a Man. The child that should be born, who was first passible, then ascended into heaven, and is to come again with glory, and to have an eternal kingdom." P. 10, Col. 1: "Now permit me, Tryphon, to shew you that Christ is God, and the Lord of Hosts." This he demonstrates from the 23rd, alias 24th Psalm, and also from the 46th, alias 47th Psalm; but the passage is too long to be transcribed here, and therefore I refer you to the original. P. 12, Col. 2: "Christ, the

Son of God, who condescended to be born of a Virgin of the race of David, existed before the Morning Star and the moon." P. 15, Col. 2: "I will endeavour to convince you from the Scriptures, that he who appeared to Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, and is called God, is distinct from the God" (that is, from the person called God) "who created all things; distinct, I say, in number, not in council and sentiment." These last words shew that he means distinct in person only not in nature, since they have the same will, counsel, and sentiment. Then he proves his assertion,—first from Gen. xix.: "The Lord (Jehovah) rained brimstone and fire from the Lord (Jehovah) out of heaven."—Second, from Psalm cx. 1: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."—Thirdly, from Psalm xlv. 6: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." There is no need of transcribing anything more from St. Justin's writings, since you, Rev. Sir, and all who have read his works, know that every part of this Dialogue, where Justin speaks, was intended to convince Tryphon that there is a plurality of Persons in God; that each of these Persons is truly and properly God; that one of these persons came into the world, and was born of a Virgin for the redemption of mankind; that this Person, when incarnate, was called Jesus Christ; and that Jesus Christ was consequently both God and Man.

The illustrious St. Augustine remarks, that "if we consider these three things in the soul of man, viz. memory (it should be sentiment, instead of memory), intelligence, and will, we shall find that, from these three, all things which we do, emanate . . . for we do nothing, but what is done

conjointly by these three.”—(*Contra. Serm. Arianonum.* c. 16.) “If, moreover,” adds an ancient council, “we look upon the Person of the Father as the understanding (should be sentiment, not understanding), it is evident that the Word (or intelligence), which is born of this understanding, is the Son; and the will, which proceeds from the understanding and the Word, designates the Holy Ghost. However, we cannot appropriate the understanding, by which the Father is designated, to the Son or to the Holy Ghost; nor the Word, which is taken for the Son, to the Father or Holy Ghost; nor the will, by which we understand the Person of the Holy Ghost, to the Father or Son.”—(*Gon. Tolet.* 15.)

LETTER XVIII.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

THE DECISION, OR DECREE OF THE COUNCIL OF NICE,
IS A CONVINCING PROOF THAT THE DOCTRINE OF THE
DIVINITY OF CHRIST WAS THE DOCTRINE OF THE
APOSTLES AND THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

REV. SIR,

What I have undertaken in this letter to shew is, that the Divinity of Christ was the doctrine of the Apostles and of the Christian Church, and I prove it demonstratively as follows :—

1. The Fathers who assembled in the Council of Nice, had each of them his diocese and his flock, over which he had been constituted Bishop by the Holy Ghost (Acts xx.); and it was the duty of each one of them to teach his flock the faith and duties of Christianity. This duty they generally performed in their own person, by the Sermons, Instructions, and Exhortations, which they delivered to the people on every Sabbath-day, when they met to celebrate the Divine Mysteries. And as there can be no doubt but that they had always taught the very same faith which they themselves believed, and which they professed in the Council of Nice, it will follow hence, and from what we read in the works of the undoubtedly orthodox Ante-Nicene Writers, that they had always taught the people that Jesus Christ was not only man, but also God, equal to his Father; and and that there were three distinct persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, subsisting in the Divine nature, which we call the mystery of the Trinity.

2. As these Bishops taught their flocks the doctrines of the Divinity of Christ, and the Trinity of Persons in God; so it cannot be doubted but that the people believed and professed the doctrine taught them by their pastors, whom they believed to have been appointed by the Holy Ghost to feed and govern them. From which it will follow, that the doctrine they professed and defined in the Council of Nice, was the public faith of all the Churches which they governed, and not merely the private opinions which the Fathers entertained in their own breasts.

3. As the Legates of the Bishop of Rome presided in that Council, and the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, were personally present in it, and all voluntarily assented to and signed the Creed, it certainly was the public faith of all the Patriarchal Churches.

4. The faith defined by the Fathers in the Council of

Nice was, at that time, certainly the same as that of all the other Bishops and Churches, who made no opposition to their decision. And as Dr. Priestley says that "three hundred and eighteen was far from being the whole number of Christian Bishops in that age," it will follow, that it was the public faith of all the other Churches which did not oppose the decision of the Nicene Fathers, although the Bishops of the said Churches were not personally present in the Council of Nice. And consequently may be said to have been the public faith of the whole Christian world.

5. This being the faith of the two hundred and ninety-five Bishops in the Council of Nice, and of the Churches which they represented, and over which they presided; and also of all other Churches which held communion with them, though their Bishops were not personally present in that Council; it will follow, that these doctrines must have been handed down to them from the Apostles; for here St. Augustin's rule is verified to the letter: "That which is received and professed by the whole world, and cannot be shewn to have been first established by any Council, cannot be looked upon in any other light than as taught by the Apostles."*

* Every one of the errors which the Catholic and Apostolic Church, "The Ground and Pillar of Truth," has condemned, appeared at their commencement to be most plausible; but there is not one of them, had they been adopted, but would have entirely destroyed Revelation: it was a small opening in the vessel, but an aperture which would have allowed the ocean to penetrate. It is absolutely necessary, says Luther, to interpret Scripture in the sense which reason understands; yet still Luther wished to preserve the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Real Presence, mysteries equally as incomprehensible as the Infallibility of the Church, which he rejected. This principle of pride stimulated Calvin, Calvin denied the Real Presence; and from Calvin sprung up Socinus, who denied the Trinity and the Incarnation. Why do you stop there? exclaim the Deists. A Divine Revelation is repugnant to Reason: we never can comprehend or explain how Jesus Christ, sent of God, can be equal to God. There is no religion but natural religion: thus sprung

6. The Bishops assembled at Nice declared, the faith they professed was delivered to them by their predecessors in their respective sees, who had received the same by uninterrupted tradition from the Apostles. And consequently it was not, like Arianism, a newly invented doctrine, but had been the public faith of the successors of the Apostles, and of all the Apostolical Churches in the preceding ages, which indeed had been but few, as this Council was held only 225 years after the death of St. John the Evangelist; and consequently it was very easy for them to trace the constant tradition of their doctrine through so short a period.

7. If all the world had not been convinced that what the Nicene Fathers said, was true, viz. that their doctrine had been handed down to them from the time of the Apostles, doubtless some one would have contradicted their assertion, and pointed out the time when, and the author from whom

up Naturalists, the Atheists, who reject natural religion, who have denied God; and in fine, the Sceptics who doubt of every thing, of the existence of Jesus Christ, of man, and of the universe. They, whose proud and overbearing spirits, three hundred and odd years ago, rejected the Supremacy of the Pope, they never dreamt what would follow; they never thought that men like them, adopting their errors, would deny God, the Immortality and Reality of the Soul, and even the existence of the Body. The visible power of Jesus Christ in the Papacy once rejected, the Trinity and Incarnation have likewise disappeared; Religion is insulted, God has withdrawn himself from their societies; and we even meet with men who tell us, and who live daily under the light of Christianity, that bodies and souls are of one substance; that everything is God—stones, plants, and animals; that all creatures are God, as God himself. The disciples of these wretched men, who have refused to believe the Catholic Church, have been struck with so great a blindness, and hardness of heart, as to deny their own existence, and even as a great French theologian says, “à s’anéantir dans ce qu’ils appellent l’humanité.” Oh! what a terrible punishment for pride, the rigorous consequence of the inflexible logic of the spirit of man! a sublime manifestation of the government of God in regard to his Church, and of his ever guiding and leading her into all truth.

it commenced ; which could not have been difficult to do, if it had not been taught by the Apostles, but began after their time. Wherefore, as no such objection was made, it is evident that what they said was true, and that it had been taught by the Apostles to the first Churches which they established, and was handed down by them till it came to the Fathers at Nice.

8. Though the definitive Decree of this Council was, by order of the Emperor, transmitted to all the other Churches, yet we do not find the least opposition made to any part of it, except what was afterwards made by the Arians about the word *consubstantial*.* No one else questioned the

* I shall here investigate the meaning of the word *Consubstantial*. Originally it was applied to things which belong to the same species, or have the same nature. Thus, Aristotle calls the stars consubstantial ; and St. Chrysostom (Hom. 16, in Gen.) says, "that Eve was consubstantial with Adam." So the Pseudo Justin, in opposing some of Aristotle's doctrines, says, "In respect to a rational nature, Angels and Demons are consubstantial." This word, however, was so seldom used by Ecclesiastical Writers, before the Council of Nice, in relation to the distinction in the Godhead, that the introduction of it has (though erroneously) been ascribed to that Council. But Origen (A.D. 230, Dial. Cont. Marcion) calls the Logos consubstantial : and Dionysius of Alexandria (A.D. 250) repeatedly uses the same appellation in respect to Christ. Eusebius of Cesarea, one of the Nicene Fathers, in addressing his Church about the symbol of the Council of Nice, defends the use of the word Consubstantial in their creed, by saying that "he knew of some ancient learned and renowned Doctors in the Churches who used it."—(*Athan. Epist. ad Afr.* T. 1, p. 987.) It would seem that before the Council of Nice, the word Consubstantial had already come (as it certainly afterwards did) to signify, as many used it, a numerical unity of substance. Neither Athanasius nor Basil, two of the most zealous and able defenders of the doctrine of the Trinity among all the Ancient Fathers, intimate, as far as I have been able to learn, the least suspicion that the Council of Antioch were Unitarians. It is very clear from the passages which I have quoted, that this Council firmly believed in the Divinity of Christ ; and since these Fathers lived so near the time when the Council in question was held, and were so jealous as well as earnest on the subject of Christ's Divinity, it scarcely admits of a doubt that your conclusion, in regard to this Council, is erroneous, and it is greatly increased by the explanations which this creed received about fifty-six

Divinity of Christ; no one else questioned the mystery of the Trinity: wherefore, the silence of all the rest of the Christian world upon these topics, is a demonstrative proof that they were universally believed and professed.

years afterwards, by the second Œcumenical or General Council, assembled at Constantinople, by order of Theodosius the Great, in order to restore peace to the Churches, which was rent by the Arian dispute, and specially to settle and establish the Nicene Symbol of Faith. After meeting and agreeing to receive and recommend the Nicene faith, with some small additions, made to oppose some new heresies which had arisen, they sent a synodic Epistle to the Western Synod of Churches, who were to meet at Rome; in which they state, that in accordance with the Nicene Creed, and "the most ancient Faith, and agreeable to Baptism, they believe in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—so namely, that there is one Divinity, power, and substance of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who possess equal Dignity and co-eternal dominion; who exist in three most perfect hypotheses, or three perfect persons;—so that the pest of Sabellius shall have no place, which confounds the persons, and takes away their appropriate qualities; nor the blasphemy of the Eunomians, Arians, and opposers of the Holy Spirit prevail, which destroys the substance, and nature, and Divinity of the Uncreated, Consubstantial, and Co-eternal Trinity, by introducing a posterior nature, of a different substance, and created."—(*Theodoret. Ecc. Hist. L. v. c. 9.*) In this Œcumenical Council were one hundred and fifty orthodox Bishops assembled, besides a number who were attached to the opinions of Macedonius. It is generally conceded, that their decision gave an establishment and an uniformity to the Christian Faith about the Trinity, which remains to the present time among the generality of Christians. This decision was so short a time after the Nicene Council, that some Bishops present at Nice, might be, and not improbably were, present at Constantinople; at any rate, the Fathers of the Œcumenical Council of Constantinople could hardly be supposed to be ignorant of what the Nicene Council meant to express by Consubstantial.—The learned Dr. Münscher admits that "the Nicene Council recognised (*Vorhand*) as decided, the doctrine of the Church, that the Son of God is called God, and is entitled to Divine Honours. They recognise also the decision established in opposition to the Noetians and Sabellians, that the Son or Logos is a proper hypostatis."—(*Untersuch, &c.*) Bishop Bull says, (*Opp. p. 114.*) "It is most clearly evident (*liquidissimo constat*) that the Nicene Fathers, in their Creed, meant to impugn other heresies besides the Arians." Schroeckh, that consummate master of Church history and Patristical learning, (*Kirchen Geshich. v. 344.*) says, in reference to the meaning

9. Even the Arians themselves, who were present in this Council, did not deny that Jesus Christ was God, or that the doctrine of his Divinity was a part of the Faith that had been handed down from the Apostles. They acknowledged the title of God to be due to him: they acknowledged that he was the Creator of the world, and of all things visible and invisible. All they contended for was, that he was not consubstantial with his Father, nor equal to him, nor co-eternal with him; but though God, that he himself had been at first created by his Father out of nothing. These very exceptions which they made, and which began only with Arius, who first broached these new opinions, which were condemned by the Fathers, are a correlative and convincing proof, that the doctrine professed by the Fathers in the Council, had been the uniform faith of all the Christian Churches, previous to the invention of the new opinions of Arius and his followers.

10. The Arians, who were present in the Council of Nice, were as much averse to the doctrine of Paul of Samosata, as the Catholic Prelates were. This evidently appears from what they did afterwards: for although in that Council there was no special discussion of the doctrine of Paul of Samosata, forasmuch as no one stood up to speak in its favour, yet in their Council of Constantinople, held eleven years after that of Nice, some of the Arian Bishops who had been personally present in the Council of Nice, accused Marcellus of Ancyra of teaching the doctrine of Paul of Samosata; and on that account, deposed him from his dignity. So that I may say, the doctrine of the simple

of Consubstantial in the Nicene Creed, "It cannot be doubted by this word that no specific unity is meant, but a numerical unity in respect to Being." So Walch, in his celebrated History of Heresies, has decided (2 Thess. s. 24); and Stark, in his History of Arianism, (Berlin, 1786, 1 Th. s. 306, 307,) has given the same opinion.

humanity of Christ was, though not expressly, yet impliedly condemned, not only by the two hundred and ninety-five Catholic Fathers, but also by all the Arian Bishops; and consequently by the unanimous voice of the whole Council.

11. The Meletians, who were reconciled to the Church in that Council, started not the least objection to the Divinity of Christ, or the mystery of the Trinity; although they had before endeavoured to embroil the affairs of the Catholics in order to carry on their own schemes.

12. As for Unitarianism, Dr. Geddes justly observes, "There was not a single voice raised in favour of it in that Council." And indeed I do not wonder at it; for from the time of the deposition of Paul of Samosata in the second Council of Antioch, held in the year 269 or 270, if we except a few of his abettors, who were called Paulians, no one of any note openly professed it, till Photinus arose, who was condemned and deposed for it in the Council of Sirmium, held by the Arians in the year 351. Nor was there any one within that period accused or suspected of it, except Marcellus of Ancyra; who, though he was deposed for it by the Arians in their Council of Constantinople in 336, was acquitted by the Council of Sardica, as Theodoret bears witness.

To sum up the whole, Rev. Sir, it appears, that the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ was, at the time of the Council of Nice, the doctrine of all the Churches of the then known world, and was rejected by none but (as a celebrated Catholic Divine justly calls them) *a few obscure sectaries*, called the Ebionites, whom, even as Dr. Priestley acknowledges, (*General View*, p. 21,) were excommunicated about, or a little before the time of Pope Victor, and a few others who arose from time to time, and who were excommunicated as soon as their tenets were known. And as this was the public

faith of all the Churches in the world at that time, it has all the characters of being the very same doctrine which Jesus Christ taught to his Apostles, which he commanded them to publish throughout the universe, and which, according to his command, they preached every where, and committed to their immediate successors, with a strict injunction that they should (2 Tim. ii. 2) commit the same to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also; and which, by these means, according to the promise of Christ, and by the assistance of the Spirit of Truth, which he promised should continue with his Church for ever, was handed down pure and unaltered from the Apostles, till it came to the Fathers who assembled in the Council of Nice; and by them and their successors has been in like manner handed down to us.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERAX,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

The Arians and Socinians have not acted with the same constancy and uniformity. The Arians have invariably asserted, that the writings of the Ante-Nicene Fathers were upon their side. This was the language held by them at the Council of Nice; and Bishop Bull and Dr. Waterland, in the 17th and 18th Centuries, had to refute the same assertion, when advanced by their Arian opponents. But the Socinians have not been always equally confident, nor indeed consistent with themselves, in referring to the early Fathers. It is impossible to read the writings of the Socinians, from their great leader down to our own times, with-

out perceiving that they have felt the difficulty of reconciling the Ante-Nicene doctrines with their own. Gilbert Clarke mentions it, rather as a fact deserving of praise, that the Socinians were the only persons who candidly acknowledged that the early writers did not agree with themselves. Socinus rather insinuates, than openly asserts, that his own party did not profess an agreement in doctrine with the Ante-Nicene Fathers; and he always allows that these early writers speak of Jesus as the Son of God, existing before the world, of the substance of the Father.—(*Respons. ad Vujeki* 11, p. 617. It is notorious, however, that many of his own party did make this appeal. Socinus himself wished to evade the difficulty by acknowledging no authority but that of Scripture. And it is well known, that the confession of faith which was drawn up at the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, asserts unequivocally that Jesus Christ was from all eternity God of God, of one substance with God the Father. No doubt was ever entertained as to this being the doctrine which was held by a large majority of the Fathers assembled at that Council; neither can there be any doubt, but that this has been the professed doctrine of the Catholic Church ever since that time. There is, in fact, no necessity for my consulting any Post-Nicene authorities, when I wish to ascertain what were the sentiments of the Primitive Church. What I have to enquire is, whether the Fathers who lived nearest to the Apostolic times, and whose works remain, believed that Jesus Christ was God, or that he was merely man. For every candid person will surely allow, that notwithstanding the plain declarations of the Fathers assembled at Nice, yet if the writers who preceded them held a different doctrine, and did not believe in the consubstantiality of the Father and Son, there would be great reason to suspect the soundness of the articles subscribed at Nice.

The Council of Antioch was held, A.D. 269 or 270 : and after many sittings, this Council condemned Paul of Samosata of heresy. Before, however, they proceeded to this step, they addressed a letter to him, in which their object was to give Paul a summary of their religious creed, which, as they say, "had been preserved in the Catholic Church from the time of the Apostles to that day." This letter is too long for me now to transcribe in this work. The Fathers begin with professing their belief in one uncreated invisible God ; after which they go on to say, "We acknowledge and preach that this begotten Son, the only begotten Son, is the image of the invisible God, begotten before all creatures, the wisdom and word and power of God, who was before the worlds, God not by foreknowledge, but in essence and substance Son of God, as we have known him in the Old and New Testament," &c. &c. I should advise you to carefully examine the whole of this letter.—*Concil. Antioch Epist. ad Dionysium et Maximun.*

Another letter is also preserved by Eusebius (7, 30, *apud Routh. Reliq. Sacr.* 11, 477), which was written by this same Council to Dionysius, Bishop of Rome, and Maximus, Bishop of Alexandria, in which the Fathers give an account of their Faith ; and towards the end of it there is a declaration of their sentiments upon the question in dispute :—"God who clothed himself with and bore our human nature, was neither without a participation in these passions, which are properly and primarily human ; neither were the actions, which are properly and primarily divine, excluded from the human nature, in which he was, and which he made the instrument of performing these actions. Properly and primarily he was formed as man in the womb ; and God was in the womb in a secondary sense, being substantially united to the human nature."—(*Apud Routh. Reliq. Sacr.* 11, 485.)

LETTER XIX.

 ON UNITARIANISM.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

REV SIR,

As Unitarians maintain that Unitarianism was the belief of the Primitive Church before the Council of Nice, I assert that it was not, and this I shall prove from the writings of the Holy Fathers of the first, second, third, and fourth centuries. But as the quotations from their writings, would be too voluminous for a small volume, I will confine myself to giving a few quotations from the Fathers in each of the first four centuries, and refer you for further proofs to their writings in each of these ages preceding the Council of Nice.

St. Ignatius, who testifies that he himself saw Jesus Christ in the flesh after his resurrection, who was afterwards a disciple of the Evangelist St. John, and was by him made Bishop of Antioch in the year 68, which Church he governed from that time till his glorious martyrdom at Rome in the year 107, says, *Epist. ad Smyrnæos*, p. 1: "I glorify Jesus Christ the God who hath given you so great wisdom—who was truly of the race of David according to the flesh, and the Son of God according to the will and power of God. I saw him in the flesh after his resurrection, and I believe him to be truly alive."—p. 7: "Ye have done well towards Philo and Reus, and Agathopus,

who followed me in preaching the word of God, by receiving them as the ministers of Christ our God; and they now return thanks to God for you.”—*Epist. ad Polycarpum*, p. 16: “Salute him whom you shall send into Syria. I pray that grace in Jesus Christ our God may be with him in all things.”—*Ep. ad Ephesios*, p. 21: “There are some who with a wicked deceit bear about, or preach, the name of Christ, but do some things unworthy of God. These it behoves you to avoid as you would wild beasts. For they are mad dogs who bite privily: and it behoves you to guard against them, being difficult of cure. There is one Physician, who is both a corporal and a spiritual Physician; begotten and unbegotten; made according to the flesh, who was the immortal God and the true life; Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of Mary, and was also born of God. First passible, and then impassible.”—p. 27: “According to the disposition of God’s providence, Jesus Christ our God was conceived by Mary, who was of the race of David; but his conception was by the power of the Holy Ghost. God manifesting himself in a human form, for our renovation to eternal life.”—And p. 29, he calls Jesus Christ, “The Son of Man, and the Son of God.”—*Ep. ad Magnesios*, p. 33: “I exhort you to do all things in concord and the love of God, the Bishop presiding as holding the place of God, the Priests as holding the place of the Apostles, and the Deacons who are very dear to me, having committed to them the ministry of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before all ages, and at length appeared.”—p. 34: “Be not led astray by heterodox opinions.—For if we now live according to the Jewish Law, we confess that we have not received the Law of Grace. For the most godly prophets lived according to Jesus Christ. For which reason, being inspired by his grace, they endured persecution, to testify to the incredulous that there is one God, who

bath manifested himself by Jesus Christ his Son, who is his Eternal Word, who did not proceed from silence, and who in all things was well pleasing to him who sent him."—In the former of these passages he expresses the pre-existence of the Son of God before the creation of the world; and in the latter condemns the doctrine and practice of the Ebionites, who asserted the necessity of living according to the Jewish Law.

See Josephus, the Jewish historian, who lived in the Apostolic age (*Lib.* 18, c. 4). See Pliny the younger, a Pagan. Pliny's *Letter to Trajan*.—This Letter of Pliny is mentioned by Tertullian in *Apologetico*, c. 2, p. 3.

St. Polycarp was, like St. Ignatius, a disciple of St. John the Evangelist, and was by him made Bishop of Smyrna, about the year A.D. 96, which See he governed till the year 166, when he suffered a glorious martyrdom for the faith of Christ. After which the Church of Smyrna wrote a letter to the Churches of Pontus, wherein they relate that when the martyr was dead, Nicetus, at the instigation of the Jews, desired the Proconsul not to let the Christians have the body, "lest they should forsake Christ, and begin to worship Polycarp." This is a plain proof that the Jews who stimulated Nicetas to suggest this motive for refusing the body, believed the Christians worshipped Christ, and believed him to be God. Nor did the Christians deny this opinion of the Jews to be true. On the contrary, in the same letter they say: "The Jews did not know that we can never forsake Christ, nor adore any other. For we worship him as being the Son of God; but the Martyrs are deserving of our love as being his disciples and imitators."—(*Apud. Euseb. L. 4, hist. fol. 39.*)

See St. Justin in his *First Apology*, p. 11, and p. 122; also his *Second Apology*, p. 13. See also his Dialogue with Triphon the Jewish philosopher. (*Biblioth. Patr.*

Tom. 2, p. 9, col. 2; p. 10, col. 1; p. 12, col. 2; p. 15, col. 2.) In every part of this dialogue, where Justin speaks, it was intended to convince Tryphon that there is a plurality of persons in God; that each of these persons is truly and properly God; that one of these persons came into the world, and was born of a Virgin for the redemption of mankind; that this person when incarnate was called Jesus Christ; and that Jesus Christ was consequently both God and Man.

See an Apology for the Christians, presented between the years 176 and 179, by Athenagoras, to the Emperors Mark Aurelius and his son Commodus, entitled, *Legatio pro Christianis*, *Biblioth. Patr.* T. 2, p. 131, col. 2.

See St. Irenæus, who was a Disciple of St. Polycarp, and suffered martyrdom in 202 or 203. In his second book against Heresies, c. 30, n. 9, and *Lib.* 3, c. 4, n. 2; *Lib.* 3, c. 6, n. 1; *Lib.* 3, c. 8, n. 2, 3; *Lib.* 3, c. 16, n. 2; *Ibid.* n. 6; *Lib.* 3, c. 19, n. 2; *Lib.* 4, c. 20, n. 1; *Ibid.* n. 3.

Clement of Alexandria was appointed Catechist of the great Christian School at Alexandria about the year 190, which place he held till about the year 202. In *Pædag. L.* 1, c. 2, p. 79, he says: "O children, our Pedagogue is like to God his Father, whose Son he is, without sin,—he is God in the form of Man, immaculate, who executes the will of his Father, the Word, God, who is in the Father, who is on the right hand of the Father, and with this form he is God." See also *Lib.* 7, *Stromat.* p. 702.

See Tertullian, who was born at Carthage in the year 160, and died about the year 245, in *Lib. ad Praxeum*, c. 2, p. 501; *Ibid.* c. 7, and c. 8; in *Apologetico*, c. 21, p. 20.

See Origen, who was born in the year 185, succeeded St. Clement as Regent of the Catechetical School at Alexandria about the year 203, and died about the year 254. In his second book against Celsus, tom. 2, p. 431, D; p.

432, G; *Lib. 4, contra Celsum*, p. 461, D; p. 462, G; *Lib. 5, contra Celsum*, p. 479, B; *Lib. 8, contra Celsum*, p. 520, M; *Lib. 1, Periarchon*, c. 2, p. 423, D; p. 424, H; p. 425, D.

St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage from the year 248 to 258, in his book, *De Idolorum Vanitate*, p. 170, col. 2, Edit. Colonice, 1617, he says, "The Son of God is sent.—He is the power of God, his Reason, his Wisdom, his Glory; He descends into the Virgin, and by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost is cloathed with human flesh. God is mixed with man. This is our God, this is Christ."—*Lib. 2, Testimonium Adversus Judæos*, his first proposition is, that "Christ is the first begotten, and the wisdom of God, by whom all things were made."—His sixth proposition is, "That Christ is God."—And his tenth proposition is, "That Christ is God and Man, compounded of these two natures (ex utroque genere concretus), that he might be a Mediator between us and his Father."

In or about the year 260, Paul of Samosata succeeded Demetrian in the See of Antioch, who soon began to deny the divinity of Christ, teaching that he was no more than any other man; on which account a Council was held at Antioch in the year 264, in which his doctrine was condemned. The fear of being deposed, induced him to retract his error; and this retraction indeed saved him for that time. But the Bishops being afterwards informed that he had returned like the dog to his vomit again, a second Council was held at Antioch, in the year 270, in which he was effectually deposed, and Domnus was made Bishop of Antioch in his stead. And refusing to quit the episcopal house, he was compelled to quit it by order of the Emperor Aurelian, though a Pagan. (See Eusebius, *Lib. 7, Hist.* c. 27, and seq. fol. 79, 80.)

The Fathers in the first Council of Antioch, in their

Synodical Letter to Paul of Samosata, say: "That what every one believes may be more manifest, we have resolved to publish and explain in writing the faith which from the beginning we have received, and which in the Catholic Church has been preserved and handed down to our days from the Apostles, who were themselves eye-witnesses and ministers of the word. That there is one God, unbegotten, without beginning, invisible, and unchangeable—of whose glory and majesty it is not in the power of man to form an adequate idea. Yet though we have but a very imperfect notion of God, we ought to be content with what his Son reveals of him, who says, No one knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. And as we learn from both the Old and the New Testament, so we believe and profess this Son to be the begotten Son, the only begotten Son, the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, the Wisdom, the Word, and the power of God, existing before all ages, not by foreknowledge, but being in nature and person God, the Son of God. But whosoever says that the Son of God was not God before the creation of the world, or who says, that to believe and profess him to be God, is professing that there are two Gods: we look upon such a one as having forsaken the ancient faith; and all the Catholic Churches are of our opinion. For of this Son of God it is written, Heb. i. 7: Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And all the divinely inspired writings declare the Son of God to be God. We believe, this Son, who was always with the Father, to have fulfilled his Father's will by creating all things. For he spake and they were made, he commanded and they were created.

For he who commands any thing, gives his commands to another person; which other person we are persuaded is no other than God, the only begotten Son of God, to whom he said: Let us make man according to our own image and likeness."—*Tom. 1, Conc. Labbei*, p. 843.

St. Dionysius of Alexandria, who governed that Church at the time when the Council of Antioch was held, in his Epistle to Paul of Samosata, says: "It is very easy to refute what you rashly advance: for how do you say that Christ is indeed a most excellent man, but not truly God, nor with the Father and the Holy Ghost to be adored by every creature? There is one Christ who is in the Father, being his co-eternal Word, he is one Person, he is the invisible God, and became visible. *For God who was begotten of the Father before the day-star, appeared in the flesh, being born of a woman.* There was one, and only one, Virgin who, being the daughter of life, *brought forth* THE LIVING, SELF-SUBSISTING, UNCREATED, WORD AND CREATOR, who came into the world, and the world knew him not.—For he who before all ages was begotten of God, in the latter times was born of a Mother. Wherefore, the Jews are Deicides, because they crucified the Lord of Glory."—Moreover, the answers which St. Dionysius gave to the ten questions proposed to him by Paul of Samosata, are convincing proofs of his having believed and taught the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ.—*Tom. 1, Conc. Labbei*, p. 854, and Seq.

See the famous Creed or Rule of Faith, of St. Gregory, Bishop of Neocesarea, commonly called Thaumaturgus, who died in the year 265, or as some think in 270; and which Creed is recorded in the works of St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Tom. 3, p. 546*.

The same St. Gregory of Nyssa assures us, *ibidem*, that till his days, that is, till very near the end of the fourth

century, this Creed, in the hand writing of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, was preserved by the Church of Neocesarea; that the people were always taught and instructed according to its contents, and were thereby preserved free from all infection of heresy.

In the farewell Oration which he pronounced in the presence of Origen, he says (*Biblioth. Patr.* p. 68): "It is easy for every one of us to give, both for himself and for all others, perpetual and hearty thanks to the Ruler and Saviour of our souls, who is His first begotten Word, the Creator and Governor of all things,"—whom he afterwards calls "God the Word."

Arnobius, who flourished about the year 297, (*Lib. 1, adv. gentes, Biblioth. Patr.* Tom. 3, p. 156,) says: "Ought we not then to look upon Christ as God, and worship him with truly divine worship, from whom we have already received so many blessings, and expect he will bestow much greater blessings upon us hereafter? Perhaps some one in a rage may say: Is Christ then God? Yes, we shall answer, *He is God*, and was sent to us for a most important cause." P. 158: "Nothing magical, nothing human, no incantation, no deceit, no fraud, was concealed in Christ: although you smile, according to custom, and wantonly indulge in an uproar of rude laughter. He was the sublime God, God from his eternal root, or generation; and being God, was sent by God his eternal Father to be the Saviour, whom neither the sun nor stars (if capable of knowledge), nor the rulers, nor the princes of this world, nor the great gods, or who feigning themselves to be gods, terrify all mankind, knew, or could suspect whence or who he was: at whose death all the elements were troubled, the earth shaken, the air involved in darkness, and the sun deprived of light. For what was to be done when he was known to be God, who formerly had been thought to have

been a mere man." Then he proceeds to lay open the grounds of believing these things, and by an Antithesis shews the improbability and falsehood of what is related of the heathen gods, and the credibility of what is related by the Evangelists concerning Christ.

St. Victor, who suffered for the faith of Christ at Marseilles, in or about the year 303, in his speech to the President, said: "How worthy is he of our love and our adoration, who when we were his enemies loved us first,—and in order to rescue us, *remaining God, he became man*, not diminishing his *Divinity*, but clothing himself with our *Humanity*."—(See *Ruinart's Acta Martyrum*, p. 304.) St. Afra, for professing the Christian Faith, was burnt alive at Augsburg, in the year 304.—(*Ruinart*, p. 502.) St. Quirinus of Siscia, who suffered in the year 309.—(*Ruinart*, p. 552.) St. Phileas, Bishop of Thmuis in Egypt, about the year 306.—(*Ruinart*, p. 540, 550.)

St. Alexander succeeded Achillas in the See of Alexandria in the year 313, which he governed till his death in the year 326. In his time and in his Church, Arius rose up, who denied Christ to be equal to his Father. The good Bishop after vain endeavours to recall him to the truth by gentle means, excommunicated him; but finding that some other Bishops had espoused his cause and embraced his errors, he wrote a circular letter to the Bishops, still extant in Socrates, L. 1, c. 6, fol. 171, in which he says, "What these have taught contrary to the Scriptures, is,—that God was not a Father; that the Word of God did not exist from all eternity; that there was a time when the Son did not exist; and that he was created out of nothing. Whoever heard such things as these; or if he should happen to hear them, would not be astonished and stop his ears that he might not hear them? Or who is there that will not condemn these, when he hears John saying,—In the begin-

ning was the Word, and by him all things were made, &c.?" He was also present at the Council of Nice, and with the other Fathers declared, that the constant doctrine of the Church, which had been handed down to them from the Apostles, was, that the Son is equal to and consubstantial with the Father.

See Lactantius, in his Books of Divine Institutions, Lib. 4, c. 29, p. 275. See the Clementine Liturgy, as it is recorded in the Apostolical Constitutions, L. 8, c. 12, tom. 1, conc. p. 473; also in the Liturgy of St. James—*Biblioth. Patrum*. T. 1, p. 18, 19; and in the Liturgy of St. Mark—*Biblioth. Patr.* Tom. 1, p. 24, 25.

I presume these testimonies are sufficient to prove that the primitive Christians believed the Divinity of Christ, and therefore it necessarily follows that they must also have believed that there is a plurality of persons subsisting in the Divine nature. That the doctrine of the three Divine Persons was first intimated by our Saviour when he promised to send the Holy Ghost from his Father; and still more clearly when he commanded his Apostles to baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. According to this form, all Christians were baptised from the beginning; and of their faith in these three Divine Persons, all Catechumens made an express profession, when they were admitted to the Sacrament of Baptism. And by these testimonies it appears, that these doctrines were taught constantly and uninterruptedly from the beginning of Christianity till the Council of Nice, in which the same doctrine was maintained, and the Son declared to be consubstantial with the Father.—These doctrines were taught by the immediate and undoubted successors of the Apostles, who governed the very Sees which the Apostles themselves had established and superintended as long as they lived. From the Apostles

themselves these first Bishops received these doctrines, and according to the command given in the Scriptures, committed them to faithful men, who taught the same to others, by which means they have been handed down, not only to the Nicene Fathers, but even to our times. The Fathers in the Councils of Antioch and Nice, expressly declare the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ to have been handed down to them from the beginning. Those in the Council of Antioch deposed Paul of Samosata for maintaining that Christ was a mere man: and those of Nice anathematized all who denied him to be consubstantial with the Father, "and all other heresies which had arisen from the beginning of the Church till the holding of that Council;" amongst which that of Paul of Samosata was undeniably one.—See *Tillemont, Conc. Nic. Art. 11*, p. 662.

I repeat here what I said in the preceding letter, that the Arians who were present at the Council of Nice, were as much averse to the doctrine of Paul of Samosata, as the Catholic Prelates were. This evidence appears from what they did afterwards. As for Unitarianism, an eminent Catholic Divine truly remarks, that there was not a single voice in favour of it in that great Council. And indeed I am not surprised at it; for from the time of the Deposition of Paul of Samosata in the second Council of Antioch, held in the year 270, if we except a few of his abettors, who were called Paulians, no one of any note openly professed it, till Photius arose, who was condemned in the Council of Sirmium, held by the Arians in the year 351. Nor was there any one within that period accused or suspected of it, except Marcellus of Ancyra, who though he was deposed for it by the Arians in their Council of Constantinople, in 336, was acquitted by the Council of Sardica, as Theodoret bears witness. The Legates of the Bishop of Rome presided at the Council of Nice, and the

Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, were personally present in it, and all voluntarily assented to and signed the Creed: it certainly was the public Faith of all the Patriarchal Churches. The Bishops assembled at Nice, I repeat, declared the Faith they professed was delivered to them by their predecessors in their respective Sees, who had received the same by uninterrupted tradition from the Apostles; and, consequently, was not, like Arianism, a newly invented doctrine; but had been the public Faith of the successors of the Apostles, and of all the Apostolic Churches in the preceding ages, which indeed had been but few, as this great Council was held only 225 years after the death of St. John the Evangelist, and consequently it was very easy for them to trace the constant tradition of their doctrine through so short a period. As these Bishops taught their flocks the doctrines of the Divinity of Christ and the Trinity of Persons in God, so it cannot be doubted, but that the people believed and professed the doctrine taught them by their Pastors, whom they believed to have been appointed by the Holy Ghost to feed and govern them. From which it will follow, that the doctrine which they professed and defined in the Council of Nice, was the public Faith of all the Churches which they governed; not merely the private opinion which the Fathers entertained in their own breasts. Even the Arians themselves, Rev. Sir, who were present in this Council (Nice), did not deny Jesus Christ was God, or that the doctrine of his Divinity was a part of the Faith which had been handed down from the Apostles. They acknowledged the title of God was due to him; they acknowledged that he was the Creator of the world, and of all things visible and invisible;—what they contended for was, that he was not consubstantial with his Father, nor equal to him, nor co-eternal with him; but that though God, he himself had been at first

created by his Father out of nothing. These very exceptions which they made, and which began only in Arius, who first broached these new opinions, which were condemned by the Fathers, are a correlative and a convincing proof, that the doctrine professed by the Fathers in the great Council of Nice, had been the uniform faith of all the Christian Churches, previous to the invention of the new opinions of Arius and his followers.

As to what is constantly advanced by Unitarians, that the Council of Nice was overawed by Constantine; in reply, I assert, Rev. Sir, that there was not the least necessity for it. Tillemont, p. 646-7, says: "that out of 318 Bishops who composed this Council, the abettors of Arius were no more than thirteen, according to Theodoret; seventeen, according to Rufinus; and twenty-three, according to the Arian writer Philostorgius. All the rest, amongst whom there were a very great number who bore about their bodies, the marks of the torments they had undergone for the sake of Jesus Christ, were all zealous maintainers of the Catholic Faith." What need, therefore, was there for Constantine to overawe the Council in favour of the Catholics, when there were 295 Catholic Prelates against 23 Arians, which gave the ancient Faith a majority of 272.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERAX,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

"If Christ be only a man," says Novation, "how is he
"every where present to those who call upon him, since

"this is not the nature of man, but of God, that he can be present in every place? If Christ be only a man, why does man invoke him in prayer as Mediator, since the invocation of a man must be considered as ineffectual to the accomplishing deliverance and salvation? If Christ be nothing more than a mere man, why is our hope put in him, seeing—'Cursed is the hope that is placed in man?'"—(*Novation de Trinit.* cap. 14.) The present Jew reads how his ancestors saw him (Jesus Christ) adored by the Christians in the first century, and he proves it from the Talmud, wherein are divers relations of R. Eleizar, the great friend of R. Akiba, who lived in the end of the first century, and the beginning of the second, concerning the Gospels, and the public worship rendered to Christ by the Christians.—*Allix's Judgment*, p. 432.

LETTER XX.

SECOND LETTER ON UNITARIANISM.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

REV. SIR,

WHEN a few years ago the Unitarians set up their new system, by which they deny the Fundamental Doctrines of Christianity, they found the whole Christian world, as I have proved, in the possession and in the uniform belief of the said Doctrines. If from our time we

gradually remount from age to age till we arrive at the very establishment of the Church; we find in every century exactly the same uniform belief; therefore, we conclude, that that constant, that uniform, that universal belief was derived from the Apostles; consequently it contains the true and genuine meaning of the Scriptures respecting the said Doctrines; therefore, the Doctrines of the Unitarians, a doctrine of yesterday, and diametrically opposite to that constant and uniform belief of Christendom, cannot be conformable to the Sacred Scriptures. This reasoning is in perfect unison with the celebrated rule of St. Augustine—a rule founded on the common sense of mankind: “That which the whole Church holds or practises, and which has not been instituted or introduced either by some Pontiff or Council, must be considered as descending from Apostolical Tradition.” “Quod universa tenet Ecclesia, nec Conciliis institutum, sed semper retentum est, non nisi auctoritate Apostolica traditum rectissime creditur.”—(*S. Aug. de Bapt. Cont. Donat. Lib. 4, cap. 24.*)—which perfectly coincides with this other maxim of St. Vincent of Lerins: “What has been believed in every place, in every age, and by all, is incontrovertibly Catholic Doctrine.” “Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est, hoc est vere proprieque Catholicum.”—(*St. Vincent Lyrin, Commonit.*)

And indeed reason dictates, that a Doctrine which is common to all Christian nations, which embraces all times and all countries, must have had a common origin; and that it cannot be traced but to the founders of Christianity itself, the Apostles of Jesus Christ. For as this Doctrine is co-eval with the Christian era, it cannot have had an author posterior to the Apostolic age; and as it is universal all over the Christian world, it must have had an universal source, viz., the preaching of the Apostles all over the globe.

Hence it evidently follows, that the present uniform belief of all Christians touching original Sin, the Mysteries of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, of the Redemption of mankind, comes down to us in a lineal descent from the Apostles, and through them from Christ himself. (See St. Matthew xxviii.)

St. Luke (xxiv. 45) informs us, "That he opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." On the other hand, the Apostles faithfully discharged the high trust committed to them; they, therefore, instructed their hearers, that is to say, the Christians of the first age, in the true meaning which Christ our Lord had attached to his own words. They did so, especially, with regard to the Fundamental points of his Gospel; such as the Mysteries of the Trinity, and the Divinity of Christ. Therefore the Apostles clearly explained to their primitive converts, whether their Divine Master understood by these words, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son; and of the Holy Ghost," three distinct subsisting persons in God; and whether they were, of course, to be worshipped as true God or not. Whether Jesus Christ was no more than a creature, or whether he was true God and true man, and so on.

Had the Apostles not done this, they would manifestly have been deficient in the discharge of their divine commission; they would have exposed their own and all future generations to the danger of going astray from the very object of their worship; to the danger of a monstrous Idolatry, in adoring three persons in God, instead of one, or a mere man in Jesus Christ, instead of a God. The Apostles of course explained to the primitive Christians the true meaning of these passages; which the Christians of the present and past ages have invariably understood to imply the mysteries of the Trinity, of the Divinity of Christ,

of original Sin, &c. &c.; and which Unitarians labour so hard to force into the service of their new fangled system. Now permit me here to ask them, how did the Apostles explain the passages under consideration? what meaning did they affix to the Oracles of their Divine Master, and to their own writings? No other, unquestionably, than that which was delivered by the first generation of Christianity to the succeeding ages; and which was uniformly and invariably handed down to the present time.

Now I ask Unitarians again, in the name of common sense, what interpretation of the Scriptures, respecting the above Doctrines, did the Apostolic age transmit to the succeeding generations? It can be no other than that in which the Christian world at all times, to this very day, has understood the said Scriptures; no other than that which imports the dogma of original Sin, the Mysteries of the Trinity, of the Divinity of Christ, &c. The inference, therefore, is inevitable; Christians have the true meaning of the Scriptures in this respect, because they have the meaning given by the Apostles; and bear always in mind, that they (the Apostles) had been instructed by their Divine Master on all the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, the Church, "Because to you it is given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given."—(St. Matthew xiii. 11.) And of the Scriptures, whilst with him in this mortal life; and after his resurrection, he gave them a full knowledge of what they did not understand of his Divine Discourses. (St. Luke xxiv. 45.)

The sense of the Scriptures, therefore, thus determined and thus delivered by the college of the Apostles to the Church formed by them, is infallibly correct—it is a revealed Truth, not only because the Apostles, as all must grant, could not err in the interpretation of the Scriptures, but also because, whilst they were explaining and delivering the

true sense of the Sacred Writings, the Lord confirmed their preaching by wonders and prodigies, and thus stamped upon it the seal of his divine veracity and approbation. The Doctrine, therefore, of the Trinity, Divinity of Christ, &c., uniformly believed and maintained to this present day by all Christendom, are Divine doctrines—doctrines delivered by Infallible Interpreters, and sanctioned as such by heaven. Whence it further follows, as two opposite doctrines or meanings cannot be both true, the Unitarian meaning or doctrine being diametrically opposite to the meaning given by the Apostles, cannot be true; and that Unitarians explain the Scriptures, in this regard, in a sense opposite to that in which the Apostles explained it.

From the unanswerable force of this argument, Christians have a well established right to reject the Unitarian explanation of the Scriptures, even without examining or refuting it in detail, as an illegitimate and profane novelty, for this plain reason, that it contradicts the interpretation of the Apostles. And, indeed, may not the Christians of our age address Unitarians in the same dignified language in which the True Believers of the second century addressed the Innovators of their time?—"Who are you? when and whence did you come? what are you strangers doing on my property? by what right, Marcion, do you cut down my woods? by what right, Valentine, do you disturb my fountains? by what privilege do you remove my boundaries, Appelles? The possession is mine; I am the old possessor; I am the first possessor; I have the sources, uncorrupted, from the persons themselves from whom the estate was originally derived; I am the heir of the Apostles; according to the provisions of their will, according to their charge of its execution, according to the solemnity of their oath, I claim the right of their inheritance."—(*Tertullian, Lib. Præser. cap. 37.*)

In a word, Unitarians come eighteen hundred years too late to teach us the true meaning of the Scriptures; this meaning has been given by the very founders of the Church of God, and sanctioned by heaven, for of them we read: "But they going forth, preached every where, the Lord co-operating and confirming the word with signs that followed."—(St. Mark xvi. 20.)

The meaning given by the Disciples of Christ to the Scripture passages relative to our controverted doctrines, is in direct contradiction to the Unitarian doctrines. That this is actually the case, is a public, solemn, and interesting fact, a fact which is substantiated by the present universal belief of all Christian Churches all over the globe, however divided they may be in other doctrinal points; by the writings of the first apologists of Christianity; by the unanimous evidence of the primitive Fathers of the Church; by the solemn decisions of eighteen œcumenical Councils held in the space of eighteen centuries; by even the universal practice, ceremonies, and public worship of the Church.

A fact of this description is indisputably true, or else there is no truth whatever in the annals of history. An attempt, therefore, to overturn this fact by a bold tone of assurance, by vague declamation, by metaphysical quibbles, by suppressing, transposing, or substituting one proposition or pronoun for another in the same text, contrary to all the editions extant, by changing the adjective to the substantive, by altering the punctuation at pleasure, by cruelly torturing the text till it submit to speak whatever Unitarians wish it to declare; in fine, by unmercifully cutting off from the body of the Scriptures, or rendering doubtful such passages as are too hard to manage, even by the free and independent interpretation of our opponents, such an attempt, I say, is a desperate measure, which sound criticism

may smile at or scorn, but from which it has nothing to fear.

Secondly, Christians support their assertion by witnesses. And by what witnesses? Witnesses the most respectable, and the most respected in all ages, and in all countries; witnesses of the highest moral probity, of known integrity of unparalleled wisdom, and moreover the best qualified to give evidence on the meaning of the Sacred Scriptures; for who are these witnesses? They are in the first place, the first members of the Church, consisting chiefly of Christians who were Saints, and for the greater part, Martyrs. These Christians received the Sacred volume immediately from the very hands of the Apostles, with the true and genuine meaning of them. They lived with them, conversed with them, listened to their preachings, in which they more diffusely explained what they had briefly stated in their writings; in short, they had every opportunity afforded them to be informed by the Apostles of the true meaning and genuine sense of the Sacred Scriptures. This first age, thus instructed and formed in the very school of the Apostles, faithfully delivered to the succeeding generation the faith of the above doctrines, once delivered to them, and so from age to age down to this present day. The second class of witnesses produced by Christians in vindication of their contested doctrines, consists of the most illustrious characters that ever adorned the Church of God, I mean the Holy Fathers, who either lived in or closely followed the age of the Apostles, down to the fourth century, both in the Greek and Latin Church. (See Letter XIX.) This long succession of Apostolic men, the greater part of whom sealed their faith with their blood, and all of whom have not less illustrated the Church of God by the splendour of their sanctity, than by the admirable productions of their genius, all, with one voice, depose in favour of the Christian dogmas against the Unitarians.

Fourthly and lastly.—Christians have in their behalf the solemn judgments and public decisions which have been rendered in Synods and Councils, held at different times and in various countries, and by which the Christian Faith has been solemnly confirmed. Christians add to this the perfect agreement of the present Greek Church with the Latin Church, in regard to the doctrines under consideration, which perfect concordance must assuredly be considered of decisive importance, when we reflect, that the Greek Schismatical Church having been now separated upwards of eight or nine hundred years, cannot be supposed to have borrowed her faith from the rest of the Christian world, on whom she looks with a jealous eye, as her rivals. The Greeks, then, have received the above doctrines from their ancestors. But permit me to ask Unitarians, what do they offer in reply to all this? Anything like argument? By no means; for that is impossible. No! but such answers as would be rejected with feelings of contempt, mingled with indignation, in any court of justice. They in substance reply,—We cannot, indeed, deny but Christians have the immemorial possession of the above doctrines in their favor, and that such was the uniform and constant belief of all Christendom through all past ages, at least from the third century; but the whole Christian world, and all past ages, were in error; we only are right; we are wiser than the whole world, and all preceding generations; we understand matters better, although but a few men, and though we are but the offspring of yesterday, and are at a distance of eighteen hundred years, we understand matters better than those primitive Christians who lived so near the Apostolic age. They were all wrong; for us only it was reserved to discover the truth; our single individual reason sees better than the general collective reason of all former ages. As to the Fathers of the Church, both Greek and Latin, whose

testimony you (Christians) cite against us, we reject them all in a lump, as "men subject to error and prejudice."—Let the world revere them, as it always did, for their sanctified character, let it extol and admire their extraordinary talents, those great men were involved in darkness like the rest of the world. We (Unitarians) alone are the true illuminati, and our authority we conceive to be greater than than that of the whole Christian world through the eighteen centuries and upwards!!!

All this is, and must be, at least virtually implied in the answers which Unitarians return to the arguments of Christians, which fall upon them with the overwhelming weight of the whole Christian world, and all past generations. Surely I need not advert any further to the inconsistency of such a reply, on which, I feel sure, every one has already passed his judgment. However, I cannot dismiss this important subject without making a supposition, which will force you to touch, with your hand, as it were, the folly of the Unitarian pretensions. Suppose, therefore, that, at some very remote period, say eighteen hundred years hence, a handful of men should rise up all of a sudden in England, and gravely tell the English nation,—Hitherto you have been totally mistaken in the true meaning of the English constitution; all past generations understood nothing at all of it; it must be taken in a sense quite opposite to that in which our forefathers hitherto took it. Pray, in what light would the then English generation look upon these new and strange kind of political demagogues? How would they treat this unheard of paradox? Why, their plain good sense would make them reply with one voice,—“What! Gentlemen, you mean assuredly to insult our Reason and our Feelings. No one hitherto understood the English Constitution! No, not the very generation which was coeval with the first establishment of our govern-

ment ; nor the English who lived and conversed with the very framers of the constitution ; nor all the national councils which were annually held for these eighteen hundred years past, and who, in their deliberations, in their debates, and in the exercise of their legislative power, were eternally guided by the constitution, as by their polar star ; nor all the tribunals of judicature throughout England, whose solemn decisions were constantly based on the constitution ; nor all the learned men that have preserved in their works the precise and determinate meaning, such as given by the very framers of it ; nor, in fine, all history, which has invariably understood them as we do at this day ? ” “ No ; no man, to this hour, understood them rightly. The English constitution signifies the reverse of what was hitherto believed ; we, after a lapse of eighteen hundred years, come to inform you, that we are the first, and the only men, that have unravelled its true meaning, the meaning intended by those who framed it ! ” What would be the surprise of any future generation, if such language were to be held out to them ? And what, then, ought to be our feelings, when we behold a small number of men in the eighteen hundred and odd years of the Christian epoch, gravely tell the world, that hitherto they did not understand the Scriptures relative to the dogmas in question, and that they are the first and only ones who have discovered the right sense ? Never were there two cases more parallel, than that which I have now supposed, and that of the Unitarians against Christians in general. The mode of reasoning and proceeding are exactly the same on both sides ; whether equally absurd, or equally correct, I leave to common sense to determine. Let them remember, once for all, that the same ancient possession and prescription of more than eighteen hundred years, the same divine and authentic titles, the Scriptures, the same mass of evidence, the same solemn

judgments and universal practices of the Church, which I have produced in defence of the Divinity of Christ, are equally applicable to every other doctrine which Christians contend for. Had we nothing else to offer in vindication of the ancient Faith against modern Philosophy, this argument alone would be sufficient to decide the question; for we are confident, that there is no court of justice in the whole world, in which, supported by such irresistible arguments as the above are, it would not carry off the palm of victory.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERAX,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

See Acts iv. 12; Coloss. iii. 17; St. Matt. i. 21. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, for the remission of sins according to the riches of his grace."—(Ephes. i. 7.) Pray, can all this be said of a mere creature? Certainly not; as long as there is any truth left in those unalterable principles, which all men bear imprinted in their minds by the hands of their Creator. As to the difficulties which you express in regard to the following texts of Scripture, viz. St. John v. 19, 30; viii. 28, 38; all these, and the like expressions, may be expounded with Maldonatus, and Petavius, Lib. 2, de Trin. c. 4, of Christ, as he is man; but the ancient Fathers commonly allowed them to be understood of Christ as God, and as the Son of God, proceeding from him from all eternity. As when it is said,—“The Son cannot do anything of himself;” it is true, because the eternal Son is not of himself, but always proceeds from the

Father. 2ndly. Because the works of all the three persons, by which all things are produced and preserved, are inseparable. 3rdly. When it is said, that the Son doth nothing but what he seeth the Father doing; that he heareth as the Father hath taught him, or shewed to him; these expressions bear not the same sense as when they are applied to men, or to an inferior or a scholar, who learns of his master and follows him. St. Augustine on this point says,—“ To see, to hear, to be taught by the Father, is no more than to proceed from him, to do and to produce by the same action, all that the Father doth and produceth.” This is the general interpretation of the ancient Fathers; of St. Athan.; St. Basil; St. Greg. Naz.; St. Chrys.; St. Cyril; St. Amb.; St. August. The words immediately following confirm this exposition, when it is said,—For what things so ever he the Father doth, these also in like manner the Son doth,—*i. e.* the very same things by an unity of nature, of will, and of action; nor could these words be true, unless the Son was the same True God with the Father. St. John v. 30,—“ I cannot do any thing of myself,” &c. &c.—(See v. 19); St. Chrysostom also takes notice, “ That it may be with no less truth said of the Father, ‘that he can do nothing of himself,’ nor without his Son, nor both of them without the Holy Ghost, because both they and their actions are inseparable.”

LETTER XXI.

THIRD LETTER ON UNITARIANISM.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

REV. SIR,

I am asked by you: "Can man sin before he exists? Could the infant that is born six thousand years after Adam consent or dissent to his prevarication? How could a just God impute a Sin to those who had no share in it?"

To these and the like difficulties proposed by you, I shall here premise a general answer, which is this: it is a maxim received by all true Philosophers and Divines, and grounded on the very essence of things, that when a fact or proposition is demonstratively proved to be self-evident, it cannot possibly be false; from that moment, whatever difficulties may be alleged against the said fact or proposition, and however unanswerable they may seem, the same fact or proposition ought to be considered as most certain and incontrovertible, and the objections urged against it as empty sophisms, void of weight and conclusiveness. Thus, as the existence of God, and the Immortality of the Soul, rest upon intrinsic and most evident demonstrations, the few objections of some libertines against them, although you were to suppose them irrefragable, can in no ways affect the absolute certitude of those fundamental truths. This maxim is founded on this the first principle of all sciences: the same thing considered in the same point of view cannot at once

be and not be, cannot be true and false at the same time. As, therefore, Rev. Sir, original guilt is proved beyond a possibility of a doubt (as are likewise the other Christian doctrines), the objections advanced against it cannot be of any weight whatever. But lest this general observation should induce you to conclude that your arguments are unanswerable, I shall immediately proceed to examine them.

You ask, "Can a man sin before he exists?" No, assuredly he cannot sin actually, by his own actual and physical will, before he actually and physically exists. But it is not thus that man sinned in Adam. Adam alone personally committed original sin, by his own free physical will; or rather, what we call original sin, was in Adam an actual and personal sin; but not so in his posterity, who are not guilty of the sin of Adam, but in as far as they are the unhappy children of a guilty parent, in whom they were all morally contained, as in the moral head, the parent and representative of mankind. Adam was appointed by the Almighty, head and representative of all men, with regard to the observance of the commandment which he imposed on him; Adam, as such, prevaricates by his own personal free will, in consequence of which he is disgraced for his own personal guilt, and with him, all his descendants, not for their own actual guilt, but because they are the children of a rebellious parent, in whose fall and disgrace, as being in a moral sense, one person with him, they are involved. Thus original sin in the first man, is a true, personal, actual guilt, but as far as original sin relates to the unhappy children of Adam, it is by no means personal and actual sin, but rather a moral and habitual guilt transmitted by their first parent, their moral head; it is an original sin, because physically committed by Adam, the very origin and principal of the human race, and contracted by his descendants in deriving their origin from him; it is the sin of human

nature, because committed by the will of him who was its parent and its principal. As actual sin renders the whole man a sinner, so the sin of Adam rendered all human nature sinful in every one that belongs to it, in so much, that God, having established Adam as the principal of the human race, and intrusted him, as such, with every thing for his own person and for his posterity, by his prevarication the whole human race became in him, as it were, one culprit, after nearly the same manner as the decay of the root suffices to blast the whole plant. This sin, considered in the descendants of Adam, chiefly consists in the privation of the sanctifying grace, and (in case this be not restored by baptism received either in fact or in desire) in the exclusion from eternal life.

It is thus, Rev. Sir, that original sin, when considered as existing in the children of Adam, is explained by the Fathers of the Church, and by the most able theologians: "A newly born child," says St. Cyprian, "has sinned no other wise, except that being born according to Adam, after the flesh, it has contracted the contagion of ancient death in its first birth."—"Infans recens natus nihil peccavit, nisi quod secundum Adam carnaliter natus, contagionem mortis antiquæ prima natiuitate contraxit."—(*St. Cyprianus, Epist. 59, ad Fidum.*) But you exclaim, how can God, consistently with his justice, punish the children for the guilt of their parents, which they did not physically, but only morally commit? I answer, nearly after the same manner as we see the same done every day among men, without any one censuring such a procedure. Does not human justice punish the children for the crimes of their parents? and are there not laws in almost every government, which degrade from the rank of nobility, not only the criminal, but also his posterity. These laws do not appear to men to be unjust. Or would you deem it unjust in a Sovereign to

act after this or such like manner with one of his subjects: "If you be loyal and faithful to me, and take my interest to heart, I shall raise you to the first degree of nobility, make you my prime minister, and bestow on you many great favors; all that I purpose doing for you shall not die with you, but shall pass to your descendants from generation to generation. But on the contrary, if instead of being loyal to me, you turn out a traitor, or rebel against me, not only you in person, but all your posterity, shall be for ever deprived of the above advantages." Now this is after our manner of considering things, nearly the way in which God proceeded with Adam, our head and representative, and who, of course, in this respect, stood morally for all men. "If thou obey my voice (such we conceive was the covenant which God made with Adam) and abstain from forbidden fruit, then not only shall you remain in possession of Sanctifying Grace, of Immortality, and be free from rebellious concupiscence, and the other miseries of life, but thou shalt transmit the same munificent gifts and exalted privileges to thy whole posterity; but if thou prevaricate, not only thou, but thy whole posterity shall be stript of the same glorious endowments; for I have established thee their head and representative, and placed, as it were, their future fate in thy hands." Now, I ask, is there any thing blameable in this conduct? Surely not.

You ask, "How could God make my fate depend on the free will of another?" I answer, he could do it nearly after the same manner as the Sovereign in the above example, who causes the fate of the children to depend on the loyalty of their parents; and after the same manner as the law considers the will of the guardian as the moral will of his pupil, in so much, that whatever the guardian does in his capacity of guardian, is deemed to be done by the pupil himself.

Now here, Rev. Sir, without fear of contradiction, I ask, does God by depriving men, in punishment of the crime of their first parent, of sanctifying grace, of the state of immortality, and the other appendages of original integrity, deprive them of any thing that is strictly due to *them*? I say no, assuredly no! the exalted prerogatives of original justice were so many gratuitous gifts and extraordinary privileges, which God in no manner owed men, and which He might have refused, even if man had never sinned, so little were they due to him, so little was their requisition proportioned to the natural exigency of his nature. If God, then, without deviating from the dictates of his justice, might have refused these gifts to man when innocent, how much more so to man when guilty. In fine, Rev. Sir, I am bold to assert, that there is scarce a mystery in the whole Christian code, in which his infinite mercy and goodness are displayed with more lustre than in the very permission of original sin. For why and with what views did God permit it? with views most worthy of his infinite wisdom and mercy; with a design of drawing from that sin infinitely more good, of raising fallen man to a state of bliss and of glory incomparably higher than that which he would have enjoyed in the condition of his original justice. No sooner was the prevarication committed, than God made known his gracious designs to fallen man by his memorable and solemn promise of a future Redeemer: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."—"Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius; ipsa conteret caput tuum, et tu insidiaberis calcaneo ejus." The Hebrew *ipsum*, the seed, or as others read, *ipse*, the son of the woman, have exactly the same meaning.

Thus God graciously designed from the beginning of the

world to send a Redeemer "in the plenitude of time" for the redemption of mankind. But what species of Redemption? a Redemption which has astonished Heaven and Earth, and which will fill men and angels with rapturous admiration for all eternity; a redemption the most glorious to God, the most plentiful, the most honorable, and the most advantageous to guilty man. For this gracious promise, after the lapse of four thousand years, was accomplished by the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation, in which the Eternal Word, the only begotten Son of God, the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity, was made flesh, and uniting to his divine nature the very nature of fallen man, in the unity of his Divine Person, was True God and True Man, and as such paid to the Divine Justice, by the death of the Cross, that rigorous and condign satisfaction and atonement for sin, which guilty man of himself was unable to pay. From that moment heaven is reconciled with the earth, hitherto accursed (Coloss. i. 20): "And through him to reconcile all things unto himself, making peace through the Blood of his Cross, both as to the things which are on Earth, and the things which are in Heaven." Mercy and Justice meet in the kiss of Peace: "Mercy and Truth have met each other; Justice and Peace have kissed."—(Psalms lxxxv. 10, 11.) The Gates of Heaven are opened to all men; from that moment all the attributes of God blaze forth with unparalleled splendour; his infinite mercy in not abandoning sinful man in his forlorn condition, but rescuing him from all his miseries, and restoring him to his former rights: "He has received Israel his servant, being mindful of his mercy."—(St. Luke i. 54.) His awful justice, in receiving by the bloody sacrifice of the Cross, an infinite satisfaction, as satisfaction strictly commensurate to the injury offered to God by sin; his infinite love towards men, "In so loving the world as to give his only begotten Son,

that every one that believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting; " his infinite liberality, wisdom, and power, in contriving for the restoration of mankind so ineffable a mystery as that of the Incarnation. " But God who is rich in mercy, through his exceeding charity with which he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together in Christ, (by whose grace you are saved,) "—(Ephes. ii. 4, 5); in consequence of which, one and the same person as capable of suffering as man, and of giving infinite dignity to his sufferings as God, and likewise in inventing such a mode of redemption as should be at once the most painful and ignominious to the Redeemer, and most lenient and glorious to men. O wonderful condescension of thy mercy towards us! O inestimable love of Charity, thou hast delivered up thy Son to redeem the servant! O sin of Adam! which was cancelled by the death of Christ! O happy guilt! which was to have so great a Redeemer!

You assert, Rev. Sir, "that by this our doctrine, we make God the author of sin, and the punisher of crimes in men, by which he has rendered it impossible they should not commit." You refer me to the *Unitarian Miscellany*, No. 1, Vol. 1, page 19. To which I answer,—By confounding ideas, you Unitarians endeavour to throw dust into the eyes of your readers. No, Rev. Sir, God is not the author of original sin, whether we consider it in Adam, our first parent, or in his posterity. And first, God is not the author of original sin as far as relates to Adam himself, for as such, it is manifest, it has no other cause than the free will of Adam, who, contrary to the positive prohibition of God, committed it by his own free choice and determination. Nor is God the author of original sin, as far as that sin exists in and affects the posterity of Adam. For what is original sin, when considered in the posterity of Adam?

It is assuredly not their actual sin,—i. e. not a sin committed by their own physical free choice, but by the physical will of Adam, which was morally their own, which principally consists in the privation of sanctifying grace, and in the exclusion from the kingdom of heaven if this grace be not restored. Now this privation of sanctifying grace, for the very reason that it is a privation or negation, does not require a certain, determinate, efficient, and positive cause ; it is sufficient that God, in consequence of the sin of Adam, ceases to preserve the supernatural habit of sanctifying grace in man ; and this is all God does in regard to original sin in the children of Adam : he, therefore, can with as little reason be said to be the author of that sin, as of all other sins, merely because he permits them. You likewise assert, that it is cruel in the extreme to doom poor innocent children, who happen to die without baptism, to eternal torments, and that for a fault which they could not help committing. I answer, by demanding of you to inform me, before the bar of public opinion, who damns these poor children to eternal torments ? Christians most certainly advance no such doctrine ; they indeed hold it as an undoubted doctrine, “ that unless those children be reborn of water and the Holy Ghost, and thus receive the sanctifying grace, which in the present order of things is a means absolutely necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven, they cannot enter it, and they thus suffer what is called the pain of loss, which consists in the exclusion of the Beatific Vision, which being an extraordinary favour, altogether undue to man, God might have refused him even if he had never sinned.” As to the sensible and corporeal pains, which God has designed for the punishment of actual sins, by sins committed by the ill use of our senses, it is the general opinion of the best Divines, and the common persuasion of all Christians, that they do not suffer them.

In conclusion, permit me to ask, why do Unitarians separate these great truths? Why do they presume to erase from the history of religion, that which constitutes its chief beauty and comfort?—that mystery which is the clue to all others, without which, as Paschal remarks, (*Pensees de Paschal*, “*Quod stultum est Dei, sapientius est hominibus,*”) Religion becomes an inexplicable enigma, and man a more inconceivable mystery to himself, than this mystery is to him. Original sin is a folly in the eye of the vain sophister; but this folly is wiser than all the wisdom of men;—“That which appeareth foolish of God, is wiser than men.”—(1 Cor. 25.) He who has revealed to us these two great mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation, makes us find the image of them in ourselves, in order that they may be ever present with us, and that we may understand the dignity of our nature.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

V E R A X,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

I answer your letter just received as follows:—If the Evangelist, by the term Word, intended to designate nothing more than a Divine attribute, how does it happen that through the whole chapter, the “Word” is spoken of as a subsisting person, and that it is expressed by personal pronouns,—he—him—by him, &c.? Again: “We know (1 Ep. St. John v. 20) that the Son of God is come, and has given us understanding, that we may know the true God, and may be in his true Son. This is the true God and eternal life.” Here the emphatic article is prefixed, the

true God therefore is meant. But the Son of God is that true God ; therefore, the Son of God is meant.

St. Thomas solemnly proclaimed the Divinity of his loving Master, when on seeing him after his resurrection, he broke out into the short but comprehensive exclamation,—“ My Lord and my God.”—(St. John xx. 28.) St. Thomas, therefore, meant the true and supreme God. Did Christ censure him for it ? By no means ; but on the contrary, reproached him rather for not having believed sooner : “ Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou has believed ; blessed are they who have not seen and have believed.”

I further argue, that from an equality of honour and of worship due to God only,—“ That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father ; he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.”—(St. John v. 23.) Therefore, the Son enjoys a perfect equality of nature and consubstantiality with the Father ; therefore, he is true God. See Hebrews, chapter i. v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. In these few verses, the Apostle may be said to have erected an impregnable fortress in defence of the Godhead of Jesus Christ, a fortress which has already baffled the long and continued efforts of the enemies of the Son of God, of the Simonians, the Cerinthians, the Ebionites, the Sabellians, the Arians, the Nestorians, the Eutychians, &c. &c. &c., and will for ever stand proof against the infuriate attacks of the Unitarian Philosopher. This chapter, in its admirable and sublime conciseness, contains so clear, so full, and so complete a promulgation of the Godhead of Jesus Christ, that even the wild and ridiculous criticism of the Unitarians, either does not at all approach it, or whenever it does, runs into such disgusting absurdities, as clearly to shew the truth of the maxim,—*Magna est veritas et precevalebit* ; Truth is great, and will in fine triumph.

Although I readily agree with all the interpreters of the Scriptures, that the word worship, adoration, the Latin *adoratio*, is taken at times in the Old Testament as an homage of inferior reverence, or even only as of civil respect; yet I defy you to shew me one solitary instance from the New Testament, in which the above expressions do not signify the true Divine worship, supreme adoration, the "*Cultum Latriæ*," which is due to God only.

LETTER XXII.

FOURTH LETTER ON UNITARIANISM.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

REV. SIR,

I have just received your letter, and in reply, I beg most sincerely to declare, that the very pretension of Unitarianism to be the doctrine of the Bible, the whole system of its general principles and particular tenets, stands so plainly and so diametrically opposed to the clearest dictates of the Sacred Volume, that this of itself is enough to disgust ninety-nine in the hundred of all who are able to read: they shake their heads and say, "No, no; this will never do. True or false, this is not the doctrine taught in the Bible: these men should honestly confess that they did not learn their system there, and either abandon it, or renounce Revelation."

A Deist might well say to an Unitarian, "Your system is no doubt free of most of the absurdities of orthodox theology: it is much more rational and manly, and approaches to the simplicity of our own creed. But why impose upon us, and impose on yourselves, by calling it the system of the Bible? Your eyes have been opened to see the falsehood and folly of that contradictory jargon which is received as Gospel by the simple, or unhappily, prejudiced believers. One reason for our rejecting the pretensions of the Bible as a Divine Revelation, is, that it does, beyond all reasonable question, contain the doctrines which you have had the good sense to disavow. But to be consistent you must go a step farther:—reject the book, and giving up all your attempts to torture it into consistency with your own rational sentiments, frankly confess, that the doctrines which it contains are enough to sink it and all its evidences together."

There may be many things in a scheme of doctrine very palatable to human corruption, and, in so far, calculated to procure for it an extensive reception; while yet there may be such palpable and flagrant opposition between it and the book from which it professes to be taken, as at once to shock the judgment of the great majority of men, to effectually counteract their wishes for its truth, (if such they may secretly have formed,) and to insure its general rejection. Besides, there are wants in the condition of mankind which Unitarianism does not meet: however reluctant men may be to acknowledge themselves utterly "lost," and "without strength," yet there remains a prevailing consciousness of sin, and guilt, and condemnation. The Gospel, in its exhibitions of an atoning Mediator, meets this natural feeling. There is an obvious congruity between the general idea of such a Saviour and the secret dictates of conscience in the human breast. Now, I assert here, without fear of con-

tradiction, that it is impossible for an Unitarian to prove his principles on these subjects Scriptural, except by proving that the principles of Trinitarians are Unscriptural. It ought to be his business, instead of proving the Unity of God, to disprove the Trinity; instead of proving Christ's humanity, to disprove his Divinity. If he can do this, he will have done everything: but till he has done this, he has absolutely done nothing, except having deceived himself or his readers.

As to what you repeat regarding the 17th chapter of John, v. 3,—“That the attention of every honest man ought to be directed to this 17th chapter of St. John, 3rd verse, “it appearing to me as decisive of the whole controversy, it “being absolutely incapable of being reconciled to the “doctrine of the Trinity;” I answer, (I have also replied to this difficulty in another part of these letters,)—When the Father is addressed as the “true God,” the “only true God,” he is so denominated to distinguish him from false Gods,—from the idols of the heathen; to the exclusion of those “quos falsa gentium persuasio introduxerat,” (Grotius as quoted by Whitby,) “whom the false persuasion of the Gentiles had introduced.” To confirm this, pray compare 2 Chron. xv. 3, 8; Jer. x. 10; 1 Thess. i. 9: also, please to recollect, that this very title of “the true God,” is expressly given to Jesus Christ, and with the same distinction too from idols. See John v. 20, 21, compared with chapter i. 1, 2. See the manner John also speaks of “the Word” in chapter i. 1, 3, as well as in other parts of his Gospel. The Evangelist does not surely contradict himself, and after having positively affirmed that the Word was God, exclude him from all claim to the Deity in the other. I have proved in these letters that there is no inconsistency between Jesus professing Divine Dignity, and his being sent, when he is considered as having

voluntarily assumed the official character of Mediator, and is declared to be "eternal life."

In fine, Rev. Sir, I repeat here what I have always declared, that one of the great leading tendencies of the Unitarian system is, the undue exaltation of man. It flatters the supposed dignity of his nature, by treating as old wives' fables the doctrine of original depravity : it flatters his pride of intellect, by making Reason the arbitress of the dictates of Revelation : it flatters his pride of self-righteousness, by assuring him, that his own virtue is to procure his acceptance with God : by denying the Deity and atonement of Christ, it releases the mind from the overwhelming impression of the great malignity of sin : by proclaiming an assurance that none shall finally perish, but that all shall ultimately arrive at the enjoyment of eternal happiness,—by denying the exertions and influences of the Holy Spirit,—it offers incense to the self-sufficiency of man, and to the omnipotence of human resolutions and human efforts, in working out a self-procured salvation.

In conclusion, I cannot but pity those, who, straying away from the well known paths of Catholic Unity, immerse these passages of the Divine Word in the freezing mixture of a cold and heartless Philosophy, or who play upon them a refined and spurious criticism, till they have cooled them down to the very Zero of infidelity.

And I am, Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERA X,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

In reply to your last difficulty, I beg to inform you, that the reason the Ante-Nicene Fathers did not speak

plainly on the mystery of the Trinity, the Sacraments, and other mysterious truths and institutions of the Christian religion, in their Apologies and several other of their writings, was because they either addressed themselves to Pagans, or at least knew that their works might fall into their hands. And certainly it would have been highly improper to expound these articles to persons who had not been previously prepared for receiving these sublime truths, in the same manner and with the same clearness as they expounded them to the faithful in their private, and in their catechistical, instructions. For holy and revealed truths are not to be exposed to derision. This very method our Blessed Saviour himself observed; for (Matthew xiii. 10, 11) when "the disciples came and said to them, why speakest thou to them in parables? He answered and said to them, because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."—And Mark iv. 34: "And without parables he did not speak to them, and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples." Nay, he did not think proper to discover even to his Apostles all the mysteries of his religion at once; for even after his last supper he said to them (John xvi. 12): "I have yet got many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." The same exact method which he himself had observed, he recommended to his Disciples, for he said to them (Matthew vii. 6): "Give not that which is holy to dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turning upon you, they tear you." You will not, you cannot deny that by these words he means, that they should not expose the great truths and mysteries of the Religion which he taught, to such as would scorn and despise them. According to this injunction we find that the Apostles and primitive Fathers were generally very cautious of discovering the

mysteries of Christianity to any but the faithful. See St. Paul, 1 Ep. iii. 1, 11, to the Corinthians; and again writing to the Hebrews concerning Christ—See chap. 5, v. 11, 12, 13, 14. This caution was most wisely observed in the Church, not only by the Ante-Nicene Fathers, but also for several years after the Council of Nice, notwithstanding that Christianity was then the established religion of the empire. For St. Cyril of Jerusalem, in the Preface to his *Catechistical Instructions*, says to the people: “When a catechistical lecture is read, if a catechumen shall enquire of you what your teachers have said, discover nothing to those who are without. For we deliver to you a mystery, and the hope of life to come. Keep this mystery till your rewarder shall come, and pay no regard to any one who says, what harm can there be, if I also learn.” And St. Augustine says, *Tract 44, in Joan*: “If catechumens desire to be fully instructed in the Christian religion, let them make haste to be baptized.” Though the Fathers were so careful to conceal the sublime truths and mysteries of the Christian religion from the knowledge of the Pagans, yet they very plainly taught them to the faithful; this is hinted in the words of St. Augustine which I have just quoted. See Origen, speaking on the Eucharist, *Hom. 9, in Levit.* See also what St. Paul says, speaking to the Elders assembled at Ephesus, Acts xx. 18, 27, 20. Now most certainly “all the counsel of God” mentioned in the 27th verse, comprehends all the doctrines he taught concerning the Divinity and Incarnation of the Son of God, as well as the doctrines of Christian morality. Notwithstanding this general caution, yet in their several works we find mention made of most of the truths of Christianity; and in many places, they as clearly express the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, as any authors have done since their time.

LETTER XXIII.

MODERN ARIANISM, OR UNITARIANISM.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

REV. SIR,

The first founders of Modern Arianism, or Unitarianism, were, Louis Hetzer de Bischoffszell in Thurgovia, who was executed at Constance in 1529; John Campon, born in Juliers, who died in prison in 1580; Michael Servetus, a Spaniard, burnt at Geneva, by order of Calvin, in 1553; Valentine Gentiles, of Naples, beheaded at Berne in 1556; and lastly, the two Socinus's,—the uncle, Lelio, who died at Zurich in 1562, and the nephew, Faustus, at Lucia-wieze, in Poland, in 1604. These two last mentioned were Italians from Sienna, and gave their name to the sect which exists even now in England and in America, under the name of Socinians, or Unitarians.

But two points of great importance are to be remarked in regard to Socinians, or modern Arians:—First, That they have scarcely ever acquired any influence, nothing in comparison with what the first followers of Arius had enjoyed. No kingdom, no republic, ever adopted their principles; they live, as it were, cut off, if I may be allowed to use the expression, from the people who have admitted them to remain among them, or forming small associations among themselves, and generally held in very little repute indeed by their neighbours. The second consideration is this:—That Arianism having appeared in an age

when religious belief shone forth in all its effulgence and force, its errors even carried with them every appearance of religion, without which it could not be expected to have obtained any success whatever. Socinianism, on the contrary, sprung up at a period when all the great and sublime mysteries of religion were submitted to the proud dictates of a slippery Philosophy; living in this atmosphere of incredulity, its followers turned their backs upon all that is sacred in Religion, and became the sport of overbearing spirits, who, in shaking off the control of God's Church, preferred Lucifer to Christ Jesus, the only begotten Son of the Eternal God. Oh! how miserable, how unhappy their situation,—all springing, I repeat, from one sole cause, viz. their forsaking that Church, which is the one Church, the true Church, the Catholic and Apostolic Church, the "Ground and Pillar of Truth."

Both these sects are Anti-Trinitarians, and both deny the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, although their motives are quite different:—the Arians having an absurd and misplaced idea of the power of God, the Socinians, an excess of human pride, which does not permit them to believe any thing which their reason cannot comprehend. A short exposition of their doctrines will better explain this difference. We read nearly as follows in the life of St. Athanasius:—The distinctive character of Arianism is, the separation of the world from God. The fundamental principle upon which the remainder of it rests, is as follows:—The creation could not support the direct action of God upon it; God could not connect himself with finite, for it would have been below his dignity so to have done. This is the reason why the Arians suppose the existence of an intermediary Being between God and the world, and this Being, according to them, is the Son of God. Not that he has the power of creating; for they consider him like an

artist who has learned his profession from another, and that he therefore, has obtained the creating power from God. The Father, properly speaking, is the Lord of the universe, and the Creator of those laws by which it was made; but he could not act immediately upon it, without destroying it at the very instant of its birth, by the effect of the Divine Majesty, which nothing created could support. His Son accordingly presents himself in his place, takes upon him the material part of the creation, and the care and the preservation of creatures. The world having been created by the Son, and being so created by him, he required power to support it, the Son not being of the same nature with the Father, he is not therefore true God; for if he had been, he could not have placed himself in direct relationship with the world: he is, therefore, of a nature resembling the Angels, and consequently is himself a creature. As, therefore, he is not of the same nature as God, nor created from matter, he has sprung from nothingness. Made to create the world, but not true God, he therefore is not eternal; for eternal existence is a property solely of the true God. He was created when it pleased God to create the world. Not being true God, he is limited in his nature, and he only knows God inasmuch as it is permitted for him to know him, exactly in the same manner as we only know God according to the limits of our understanding. Nothing is immutable but God, who is so by his nature: the Son being changeable in his nature, he might make a bad use of his liberty; and this is the reason why it was necessary that his liberty should be restrained like all finite creatures. This trial the Redeemer underwent at his Incarnation; but God foreseeing that he would come off triumphant, destined him beforehand to be the Creator of all finite creatures, and to be their Saviour. The title of Majesty is then the reward of his merits; and his stay on earth among mankind,

has been his time of trial. Two finite Beings cannot form one only person ; consequently, what in mankind is called intelligence, the same is likewise in the Redeemer, the Son of God. Besides, it was requisite that he should gain virtue, properly so called, by a good use of his liberty, by his fidelity, and by his resignation in sufferings.

The Son of God has then truly and really suffered in this manner. As to the Holy Ghost, the Arians are obliged to place him below the Son, as it was the Son who sent him : all this, however, does not prevent them from adoring the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Thus Arianism is a true Polytheism.

Let us now compare the doctrine of the Arians, such as I have here brought before your view, with that of the Socinians. All the different Protestant sects which have sprung up since the Reformation of Luther, excepting only the Socinians, profess with the Catholic Church this dogma of the Divine Personality of our Saviour ; that is to say, in their eyes, he is both God and man. The Socinians, on the contrary, declare, that the Father of Jesus Christ alone is God : they do not consider that the rejecting the dogma of the Trinity endangers salvation, for they regard it only as useful ; in which they appear to be at variance with their own doctrines. They look upon the Son of God as a mere man, who, being conceived by the Holy Ghost, has been, for this reason, called the Son of God. The Socinians add likewise, that he enjoyed another great privilege of being received into heaven before he undertook his mission, and declare that he was instructed there regarding the part he was to perform among mankind in general. It is evident that they enter into these details merely to do away with the difficulties which must occur in regard to the explanation of certain passages of the Bible, the moment they reject the Divinity of Jesus Christ ; and likewise to explain conform-

ably to their system, the origin of religious ideas, and the manner how Christ received the dogmas which he taught. In fine, that after having finished the work of the Redemption, he has been, as the reward of his obedience, raised to the Divine Dignity, and received Sovereign power over the whole universe, in so much that all Christians can and ought to address themselves to him and to adore him as God, as a Being clothed with Divine Power. Faustus Socinus was so zealous to preach the adoration of Christ, that Blandrata invited him to come to Transylvania, to gain over the Unitarians there, who were more consistent in their principles than he was, and who could not be brought to adore a mere creature ; and they strongly suspected him to have much contributed to the imprisonment of Simon David, who sustained this principle in all its rigour. The Catechism of Rakau, the only symbolical book of the Socinians, declares that those who do not render homage to Jesus Christ, after the manner I have mentioned, are unworthy of the name of Christians. All Unitarians avow that there are two sorts of adoration ;—the highest, to God alone ; an inferior one, which resembles the Invocation of Saints in the Catholic Church, to Jesus Christ. It is thus that these sectarians pretend to uphold inviolably the unity of the Godhead ; admitting on the one hand, one true Supreme God, and also a second inferior God, who is not true God. If they had been gifted with a more clear judgment, they would at once have perceived, that if the Gospel represents the Son of God both as a Person and as a God, which Socinians do not grant, it is impossible to conceive any other connection between the Father and Him, than that which the Catholic Church has ever taught. You must agree with me, that it is a most ridiculous and strange Theology, which teaches that God could, in the course of time, change his manner of governing the world ; that is to say, since the commence-

ment till the coming of Jesus Christ, he had directed it in person, then he suddenly changes his mind, and, as if to repose, hands over the reins to a Lieutenant, on whom he bestows without doubt a part of his supreme power, or at least his omniscience, and other similar qualities; as if such a division of the Divine attributes was, or could be considered as, among possible events.

It is worthy of remark, that when once man is impressed with a mean idea of his vocation, it very seldom happens that he can, whether by thought or by inclination, raise himself above this level. He who persuades himself that it is not in his power to perform certain moral obligations, will never during life fulfil them; and he who dies convinced that certain operations of the mind are above his strength, will never resolve the problems which exact operations of this sort. It is thus that Socinus, in order to explain the image of God in man, the property (if I may use the expression) which makes him man, says, that it consists in the sovereignty of man over animals. Noble vocation indeed! the system is more worthy of a Shepherd than of a Theologian. In fine, Rev. Sir, the grand principle of Socinianism is—That no mystery in religion can be admitted which is above human reason or repugnant to it. This Doctrine flatters the Human Heart; but it is, in fact, the most extravagant inconsistency in man, who at almost every step is compelled to own the weakness and short-sightedness of Reason, and to whom the whole universe is in every part an inexplicable enigma; but much more in a Christian, to whom the Scripture presents a Religion founded on Mystery and Revelation. This inconsistency becomes more glaring, when we take a nearer view of the doctrines of the most celebrated Socinians; differing widely from each other, and all fraught with Mysteries more incomprehensible than those at which they take offence—if their arrant nonsense may

be allowed the name of Mystery. The Evidence of Divine Revelation, which by its Meridian Brightness dispels the mist of Deism, exposes also the artful subterfuges and studied evasions of Socinianism. The Calvinists, who rejected mysteries in the Eucharist, and several other doctrinal articles, upon the Socinian principle, and who established religion upon the pretended ground of Reason, contesting its having been founded by Christ on authority, were often at a loss for an answer in defending the far more incomprehensible mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation against the Anti-Trinitarians. Unwilling, however, to set aside Christianity itself, by stripping it of every advantage of which it is possessed, they, by a palpable dereliction of their own principles, repressed those errors with the sword. But great numbers of them now have so far shaken off the yoke of Christianity, as to have, in many points, adopted the Socinian system. "In this," says d'Alembert, "if they are not orthodox, they are at least consistent."—(*Miscellaneous Pieces*, printed at Paris and at London.)

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERA X,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

I have just received your very long letter with your objections to the Divinity of the Holy Ghost; but I beg you will recollect, that I am only in this work defending the Divinity of our Saviour; but fearful that you should for one moment suppose that I am disinclined to meet you on that verity, I beg to inform you at once, that the Divi-

nity of the Holy Ghost is clearly proved from Scripture. When Ananias attempted to impose on the Apostle Peter, by keeping for his own private use, a part of the money which he had obtained for his field, (the whole of which he had solemnly engaged himself to place in the common stock for the general use of the faithful,) the Apostle said to him : Why hath Satan tempted thy heart, (that is, why hast thou given way to the temptation of Satan,) that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost, and by fraud keep back a part of the price of the land ? Would not the land have remained with thee, if thou hadst wished to keep it ? And after thou hast sold it, was not the price in thine own power ? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart ? Thou hast not lied to men, but to God.—(Acts v.) Nothing can more clearly prove the Divinity of the Holy Ghost than this declaration of the Apostle—a declaration which was confirmed by an evident miracle, by the punishment of Ananias, for he had no sooner heard the words of Peter than he dropped down and expired. The Holy Ghost is put on an equality with the first and second Persons of the Godhead in the administration of Baptism ; for the Apostles were commanded to baptize men in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matt. xxviii.) : he is also joined with them in the invocations for grace.—(See St. Paul, 1 Cor. vi.) Many other passages from the Sacred Writings I might produce ; but these are amply sufficient to prove that the Holy Ghost is equal to the Father and the Son, and that he is the same Lord and God as they are.

Truth, Rev. Sir, is unchangeable : like its Divine Author, it is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. But some may ask,—What are we to do, when men of great learning and apparent piety create obstacles which occasion Religious Differences ? That there would be such men was foreseen by its Divine Founder ; who cautions us

against their seduction, and tells us they are wolves in the clothing of sheep. But whenever there occur differences on Religious Subjects—to the question, What are we to do? Jesus Christ has, in one short sentence, given the answer,—“Hear the Church.”—(Matt. xviii.)

LETTER XXIV.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

THE WHOLE CATHOLIC CHURCH AGREES WITH THE NICENE COUNCIL.

REV SIR,

The whole Catholic Church in all ends of the earth, and in every age, has been of one mind with the Nicene Fathers, and not only acknowledged him as the Christ, but worshipped him as the only begotten and eternal Son, and honoured him even as they honour the Father. Since the time of the Arian controversy this cannot be disputed, but is equally certain that faith in the eternal Son of God was the Catholic faith before the controversy began. Barnabas, (*Cotel. Apost.* pp. 60, 61,) the Contemporary of the Apostles, says, that “to Christ, the Father said, come let us make man; and that if the Son of God had not come in human form, we could as little have borne his glory as we can gaze upon the Sun.” From Irenæus it would be most easy by numerous and unanswerable passages, to

shew that the Church believed in the eternal and co-equal Son of God. The third book, *Contra Hæreses*, is itself decisive of the question. That the faith of Irenæus was that of the universal Church, may be seen at large in Bull's "*Defence of the Nicene Faith*," and also in his "*Primitive and Apostolic Tradition*."

An eminent English Protestant divine says: "Yea, the last and most celebrated (Strauss) of their writers (German Rationalists), who has just endeavoured to prove that the Gospels are a mere collection of legends, asserts in the most explicit manner, that Faith in the Divinity of Christ was taught in the Gospel and professed by the primitive Church." Strauss, in his *Summary of the New Testament Doctrine*, says: "It was thought that the Messiah, now exalted to the right hand of God, could from the beginning not have been an ordinary man; not only was he anointed with the Spirit of God in richer measure than Prophet ever had been, but, as men variously conceived, he was either supernaturally begotten through the Holy Ghost (Matt. and Luke 1), or as the Wisdom and Word of God had descended into an earthly body (John 1), in as much as before his appearance as man he had been in the bosom of the Father in divine majesty (John xvii. 5), so his descent into this world, and especially his devotion of himself to an ignominious death, was a humiliation which he voluntarily undertook for the good of man."—(*Strauss, Leben Jesu*, vol. 2, 694, 695.) Such is the confession of the German Infidel respecting the doctrine of the Gospel. His declaration respecting the faith of the Anti-Nicene Church is equally ambiguous and still more remarkable. After noticing the second article of the Apostles' Creed, he says: "The fundamental theme of the Christian faith, which is, 'The word was made flesh,' or, 'God manifest in the flesh,' was endangered on all sides; as at one time the Deity, at another

the Humanity, and then the true union of both were controverted. They, however, who, like the Ebionites, entirely denied the Deity, or, like the Gnostics, the Humanity of Christ, excluded themselves too decidedly from the Christian community."—(Ibid. 698, 699.) Just mark this confession of the last enemy of Gospel truth. In his eyes, "The Doctrine of God manifest in the Flesh, is the Fundamental theme of the Christian Faith, and they who deny Christ's Deity are without the pale of the Christian Church."

But then after mentioning the tenets of Arius and Apollinarius, he says: "To such views it was more easy to give an appearance of Christianity. Nevertheless, the internal conviction of the Christian Church rejected the Arian representation of an inferior Deity who had in Jesus become man, for this reason besides others, because on this view the express Image of the Deity would not in Christ have been manifested."—(Ibid.) We need no further evidence to prove "That Jesus, the Son of Mary, has been universally acknowledged as the only begotten and eternal Son of God. And that therefore the prediction uttered by the Angel, and recorded by St. Luke, notwithstanding its apparent improbability at the time, has been minutely and wonderfully accomplished. We must therefore conclude, either that God has set the seal of Truth upon a wicked Blasphemy, as this Prediction ascribing Deity and Divine Honour to a man assuredly is, if it be false, or we must acknowledge that St. Luke was an Inspired Writer, and consequently that his account of the Miraculous Conception and Birth of our Lord is true." This talented Protestant divine again says: "Shall we have recourse to these evasions whereby Socinians explain away the existence of the Devil, demoniacal possession, the Doctrine of Atonement, and the Deity of Christ, and say that a Throne of David, and House of

Jacob are Oriental figures, which when turned into occidental prose, mean the Throne of God in Heaven, and the Gentile Churches? Consistency, Reason, and the Catholic Faith, alike forbid such a solution. If we adopt a figurative throne of David, and a figurative house of Jacob, we must in all consistency admit also a Figurative Conception, and a Figurative Son of God, and thus give up the Fundamental Truths of Christianity, and basely betray the Christian Faith into the hands of its enemies. If we admit Oriental figures in one part of the New Testament, we cannot deny them in other parts."

But now permit me here, Rev. Sir, in sober sense to ask again my Protestant friends this simple question: Why do they give a figurative meaning to these plain words of our Blessed Saviour, "This is my Body?" Let them recollect, that the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament has ever been the doctrine of the Catholic Church (See Note to Letter VII.); it has also ever been the doctrine of all those Heretics who have separated in the early ages from the Catholic Church; it is this day the belief of the Greek and Lutheran Churches. And Martin Luther himself, the Father of the (Pretended) Reformation, calls all those who deny the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament, "Devils, and Super-Devils."—He also calls them, "Bread Eaters," &c.

Hear Archbishop Laud (*Speech in the Star Chamber*, p. 47): "The Altar is the greatest place of God's residence on earth. Yea, greater than the pulpit; for there it is, 'Hoc est corpus meum' (This is my Body); in the pulpit it is at most 'Hoc est verbeum meum' (This is my word); and a greater reverence is due to the body than to the word of the Lord; and to the throne where his body is present, than to the seat where his word is preached." Words so clear against the Calvinistic Doctrine of a few years after,

that Mr. Prynne asks with indignation (*Prynne's Breveat of Laud's Trial*, p. 520), "Whether any other Protestant did ever hold the doctrine of Christ's Body being upon the Altar? No, says he, never Protestant wrote so before himself."

Every act of our Saviour was intended for our advantage and instruction. This do, said he, in Remembrance of me. What doth this mean? is it not, what I do now, do ye! Panem accepit et verbo quo dicit hoc est corpus meum, mutat in corpus suum, et dat manducandum discipulis. "He took the Bread, and by the words, 'This is my Body,' He changes it into his Body, and gave it to his Disciples." —(*Luther, Second Tome of his Works*, p. 253. Wittemberg Edition, A.D. 1562.)

The learned Protestant Dr. Heylin, in his treatise, entitled "*Respondens Petrus*," openly reproaches Archbishop Usher with having, in answer to a Jesuit's challenge, deviated in toto from the doctrine of the Church of England concerning the Real Presence, and quotes many passages to prove that she holds it as firmly as the Catholics. We all know that Usher was more a Calvinist than a true member of the Established Church. So was Dr. Marsh, by his own confession, together with nearly every other Protestant Prelate (regarding the Eucharist) then in the kingdom.*

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERAX,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

* Mr. Pellison, in his *Treatise on the Eucharist*, tells us, that after he had examined the objections and the pretended impossibilities alleged against this mystery by Aubertinus, he had only to raise up his eyes to heaven, and

POSTSCRIPT.

I answer your difficulty by shewing that the practice of praying to Jesus Christ was continued by the immediate followers of the Apostles; and it appears from various evidence to have been the common well-known practice

they vanished in a moment. For he found God so great, and so exalted, and himself so little and so insignificant, that he wondered how any one could entertain any serious doubts of this kind, if he only considered the works of the creation. In fact, if the common operations of nature are so incomprehensible to our weak reason, how can we expect to comprehend and penetrate into the secrets of the Divinity? This testimony of Mr. Pellison is the more deserving of credit, as he had been educated in Calvinistic principles, and was in other respects distinguished for the superiority of his genius, and the extent of his erudition. I have stated in another part of this work, the testimony of another celebrated scholar, I mean Erasmus, who lived in the very time when this important controversy was carried on with the greatest warmth by the first Reformers. We cannot for a moment suppose that Erasmus was unacquainted with all the arguments and difficulties urged by the Sacramentarians against this Mystery; but he assures us that they made no impression on his mind, and that he never entertained any doubt respecting the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

You will permit me here to ask this simple question: If the Holy Fathers had believed, as Protestants do, that the Body and Blood of Christ are not really present under these figures and symbols, how comes it to pass that Luther so strongly urges against the Sacramentarians the following argument? (*Tom. 7, fol. 301.*) "That whereas the Fathers so often, and on so many occasions, speak of the blessed Sacrament, and so frequently inculcate that it is the body and blood of Christ; NOT ONE OF THEM ALL, upon any occasion whatever, should let slip these or such like words (so often repeated by the Sacramentarians), the body and blood of Christ are not there; it is only bread and wine;—especially since it was of the utmost importance that men should not be deceived on this point. Certainly, in so many Fathers and so many writings in which they deliver their sentiments, their negatives might once, at least, have been found, had they thought the body and blood of Christ were not really present. But they are all unanimous; and, therefore, they never say any such thing, because they never thought any such thing."

I repeat here what I have always endeavoured to enforce on the Public, that the testimony of the senses can have no weight against Divine Revelation;

among them.—(See Pliny's letter to the Emperot Trajan.) St. Polycarp, in the introduction to his Epistle to the Philippians, prays that mercy and peace may be "multiplied to them from Almighty God, and from our Lord and

Reason suggests that God is to be heard in preference to any human authority; and therefore those persons who give authority to the senses as to contradict Revelation, do, in fact, undermine the foundations of religion. Let the Christian reader therefore say with Dryden,—

"Can I believe eternal God could lie
Disguised in mortal mould and infancy?
That the great Maker of the World could die?
And after that, trust my imperfect sense,
Which calls in question his omnipotence!
Can I my reason to my faith compel,
And shall my sight, and taste, and touch rebel?
Superior faculties are set aside;
Shall their subservient organs be my guide?
Then let the Moon usurp the rule of day,
And winking tapers shew the Sun his way.
For what my senses can themselves perceive,
I need no revelation to believe."

Hind and Panther, Part I.

In respect to metaphors, as used by Christ, I grant at once that Christ makes use of metaphors, but in so doing he never uses the words definitely; he does not say, I am this door, I am this vine—but the door, the vine; and he explains that they are metaphors, by saying, I am the door of the sheepfold, by me if any one enter, he shall be saved (St. John x. 9). And again, I am the vine, you are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, beareth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing (St. John xv. 5). In fine, in these expressions, "I am the vine," or the like, there is a manifest opposition between the terms of the assertion, which makes it absolutely impossible they should be true in the literal sense; the word, I, signifies a human person; the word, vine, signifies a tree; now it is evidently impossible that a human person and a tree should be literally the same thing. But in the words of the institution, "This is my Body," the word, this, signifies nothing of itself, but is equally applicable to anything whatsoever; and in the words of the institution it is applied to nothing till the whole sentence be finished, and then it is applied to Christ's Body, which was then really present in his hand, and given to his Apostles, so that in this expression there is not the

Saviour Jesus Christ.”—St. Ignatius to the Magnesians, wishes them health from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.—In his Epistle to the Romans, he says: “Health in our Lord Jesus Christ, our God.”—In that to the Church of Smyrna: “Health in the Immaculate Spirit,

smallest shadow of contradiction. Besides, in these other expressions, “I am the vine,” “I am the door,” there is no manner of reason, either from the circumstances in which they were spoken, or from the context, to suppose them meant in the literal sense, on the contrary, every thing about them shews that they are parables. But I have demonstratively shewn in my *Reply to Hook’s Novelties of Romanism*, that the words of the institution could not be meant in any other sense than the plain, obvious, and literal sense of the words. See also *Verax’s Triumph of Truth*, where this point is argued at length by way of question and answer.

But I may be here told, that Christ concludes with these words: “Do this in memory of me.”—(Luke xxii. 19.) True; but the remembrance does not exclude his presence, for the Eucharist is both a Memorial of Christ and the Real Presence of Christ. When a person stands visibly before us, we have no need of any sign to call him to our memory; but if he were present in such a manner as to be concealed from all our Senses, without a memorial of him, we might as easily forget him as if he were at a great distance from us. The sense of these words, then, which we always repeat at the consecration, is this:—“As often as in imitation of this action of mine, by consecration you change the elements of bread and wine into my body and blood, do this with a grateful remembrance of my death and passion, and of the institution of this sacrament at my last supper, when I conferred this power upon you.”—And, indeed, were this sacrament but a bare memorial of Christ, the Manna, the Paschal Lamb, and other figures of the Old Testament, would, both in worth and in representation, have far surpassed this of common bread and wine. The learned Dr. Adam Clarke declares—and this has been adopted by Mr. Horne in his Introduction to the Sacred Scriptures, and by Mr. Pope in his disputation with Mr. Maguire—that had these words of the Institution been spoken in Latin or in English, there might be some reason for supposing that our Saviour meant them to be understood literally; but as they were spoken in Syriac, in which, as they pretend, there is no word that expresses, to signify, represent, or denote, hence the expression, it is, must have the very same meaning as, it represents, it signifies.—“Nor would any man,” they add, “in the present day, speaking in the Syriac language, use other terms to express, ‘This represents my body;’ this represents my blood.” Bishop Wiseman, however, in his *Dissertation on*

and the Word of God."—And again: "I glorify Jesus Christ our God, who hath given unto us this Wisdom."—The Church of Smyrna, in her circular to all Christians, prays that "Mercy, Peace, and Love, may be multiplied to them from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Syriac literature, has clearly proved that the Syriac language abounds with words that express, to mean, to signify, to denote; and of these words he has given a considerable list, amounting to more than forty, selected from the most classical and standard writers in the Syriac language. He shews also, that the genius of the Syriac language is just the reverse of what those gentlemen represent it. As a triumphant refutation of their assertion, and at the same time as a strong proof and confirmation of Catholic doctrine, I subjoin the following citation from St. Maruthas, an illustrious Father of the Syriac Church, who was contemporary with St. Chrysostom, and Bishop of Tagrit in Mesopotamia. In his Commentary of St. Matthew's Gospel (preserved in the Vatican Library), after weighing the motives of the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament, the above mentioned Prelate proceeds: "We believe it to be the body and blood of Christ, and for this reason, Christ did not say, 'This is a figure of my body,' but truly, 'This is my body.'"—"Enim vero Christus illud non appellavit typum aut figuram, sed dixit, vere 'Hoc est corpus meum,' et hic est sanguis meus."—(See *Bishop Wiseman's Dissertation*, printed at Rome in 1828, and *Assemani's Bible Orient.* T. 1, p. 179.) But above all we have the authority of the Catholic and Apostolic Church for this and for every other article of Catholic faith. We are commanded to hear the Church: "He that will not hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen and a publican."—(St. Matthew xviii. 17, 18.) "He that knoweth God heareth us, and he that knoweth us not, is not of God; in this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error."—(1 St. John iv. 6.) "Go ye, preaching the Gospel to all creatures, &c. He that believeth not shall be condemned."—(St. Mark xvi. 16.)

Now if Christ be always with his Church, as he has promised to be, and has made her "the Ground and Pillar of Truth, against which the gates of Hell shall never prevail," and given her the Holy Ghost to assist her to all truth, so that all her definitions in approved General Councils are the very dictates of the Holy Ghost, then it is impossible the Church should err in faith. 2nd. But all this Christ has done for his Church. 3rd. Therefore it is impossible the Church should err in Faith.

The sequel of the major is manifest by the very terms of the supposition. The minor is proved: Go ye, teaching all nations, &c., and behold I am with you all days (he is with her teaching) (St. Matt. xxviii. 20); The house

Moreover, St. Justin Martyr speaks still more clearly, if possible, than these: "God," says he, "and his only begotten Son, together with the Spirit, we worship and adore."—And again: "Next after the unbegotten and ineffable God, we adore and love him who is the Word of God; because that for our sakes he became man, and was made partaker of our sufferings, that he might heal us."—And again: "We know Jesus Christ to be the Son of the true God, and therefore hold him to be the Second in order, and the Prophetic Spirit the Third; and that we have good reason for worshipping in this subordination, I shall shew hereafter."—(*Justin Martyr's Two Apologies, passim.*) Again: "The leaders of these sects have each in their different ways taught their followers to blaspheme the Maker of the Universe, and Him, who by his prophets he had foretold should come, Christ, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; with whom we hold no communion, knowing them to be dishonourers of God and Religion, and despisers of the Laws; who, acknowledging Jesus in name only, refuse to pay him divine worship."—(*Dial. cum Tryp. ed. Thirlb. p. 207.*) Again: "The Scriptures expressly declare, that Christ was to suffer, and is to be worshipped, and is God." (*Ibid.*) St. Irenæus says: "That every knee should bow to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King,

of God, which is the Church of the living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth (1 Tim. iii. 15); The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it (St. Matt. xvi. 18); He will give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever, &c. He shall teach you all things whatsoever I say to you (all points of faith) (St. John xiv. 16); He shall teach you all truth (no errors) (St. John xvi. 13); It would seem good (say the Apostles in Council) to the Holy Ghost, and to us (Acts xv. 28).

The consequence is confirmed, because were not the Church Infallible in things appertaining to faith, we could have no Infallible Assurance at this distance what was the Word of God, and what not; or what the true sense or meaning is of any one book or chapter in the whole Bible, nor consequently of our salvation, since "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6).

according to the good pleasure of the Invisible Father.”—
(*Lib.* 1, cap. 2.)

Origen likewise is very express to the same purpose, and even gives us several of his own prayers to the Son of God: “We must pray,” says he, “to the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit, that he would take away that mist and darkness which are contracted by the filth of our sins, and dims the sight of our Souls.” He addresses himself to our Saviour in these words: “O Lord Jesus, grant that I may be found worthy to have some monument of me in your tabernacle. I could wish to offer gold, or silver, or precious stones with the princes of the people; but because these things are above me, let me at least be thought worthy to have goats’ hair in the tabernacle of God, only that I may not in all things be found empty and unfruitful.”—(*See Bingham’s Antiquities*, b. 13, c. 2, p. 52.) It may be observed also, that Origen has more than one hundred Homilies, which conclude with doxologies to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. I add further, that this learned man has spoken expressly upon this very text of Scripture (1 Cor. i. 2), and puts its genuine meaning past all doubt: “The Jews,” says he, “have not believed in Christ, and therefore do not call upon him whom they have not believed.”—(Rom. x. 14.) But in the beginning of the Epistle which Paul wrote to the Corinthians, where he says,—“With all who, in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours,” he pronounces Jesus Christ, whose name is there called upon, to be God. If, therefore; Enos (Gen. iv. 26), and Moses, and Aaron, and Samuel, called upon the Lord, and he heard them (Ps. xcix. 6); without question they called upon the name of Christ Jesus. And if to call upon the name of the Lord, and to adore God, be one and the same thing, like as Christ is called upon, Christ is also to be adored; and as we first of all address

our prayers to God the Father, so likewise to the Lord Jesus Christ; and as we prefer our petitions to the Son, and as we render our thanksgiving to God, so we likewise render thanksgiving to our Saviour. For the Holy Scripture teaches that one honour shall be ascribed to both, that is, to God the Father and the Son, when it says: That all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. (St. John v. 23.)—(*In Epist. ad Rom. lib. 8.*)

Tertullian, a little before the age of Origen, assures us, that the invocation and worship of Christ was the practice of all the Christian World.—“The kingdom and the name of Christ,” he says, “are extended without limits; he is every where believed in; he is worshipped in all nations; he reigns every where; he is every where adored; he is in all places equally offered to the acceptance of all; he is to all a King, to all a Judge, to all a God, and Lord.”—(*Adv. Judæos*, cap. 7.) St. Cyprian frequently speaks of the same practice: “We offer up unceasing thanks to God the Father Almighty, and to his Christ, our Lord, God and Saviour, for his divine protection of the Church.”—(*Epist.* 51.) And again: “We shall not cease to give thanks to God the Father, and to Christ his Son, our Lord.”—(*Epist.* 61.) Again: “God the Father,” says he, “commanded that his Son should be worshipped; and the Apostle Paul, mindful of the divine command, says accordingly: God hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And in the Revelation, when John would have worshipped the Angel, he forbade him, saying,—“See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren; worship the Lord Jesus.” Nor is the worship of the Lord Jesus peculiar to the Church Militant; for even the Church Triumphant is everlastingly exercised in the

same blessed employment.—(*De Bono Patientiæ.*) “And when Jesus had taken the book, the four beasts and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the Saints; and they sung a new song, saying: Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand; saying, with a loud voice,—Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”—(Rev. v. 8—13; vii. 10.)—(*De Bono Patientiæ.*) And again: “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”

Now how this evidence from Scripture may affect your mind, I cannot say. But to me it appears to contain no less than a Theological Demonstration, that Jesus is entitled to Divine Honours. And we are told that Socinus himself was so affected with it, that though he believed the Son of God to be no more than a man, he could scarce consider them as Christians, who withheld adoration from him. He should have gone two or three steps farther, and concluded, that if Jesus Christ be entitled to Divine Honours, then he is possessed of a Divine nature—then he must be ineffably one with his Heavenly Father; seeing both Reason and Scripture declare there is but One Living and True God.—(See Gal. iv. 8; St. Matt. iv. 10.)

LETTER XXV.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

A CONCISE SCRIPTURAL VIEW OF THE DIVINITY OF OUR
LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

REV. SIR,

I.—Jesus Christ was in being before he was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary. (See Postscript to Letter XIII.) This appears from the following passages of the Sacred Writings:—1. He was the God who fed Jacob all his life long, and the Angel which redeemed him from all evil, to whom he prayed that he would bless the sons of Joseph.—(Gen. xlviii. 15, 16.) 2. He was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life.—(Gen. xiv. 17, 18; Heb. vii. 1, 10.) 3. The Israelites tempted Christ in the wilderness, and were destroyed by serpents.—(Exod. xvii. 7; 1 Cor. x. 9.) 4. When Jacob returned to his own country, he had power over the Angel, the Lord of Hosts, with whom he wrestled.—(Gen. xxxii. 24, 30; Hos. xii. 3, 5.) 5. His goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. — (Micah v. 2.) 6. We were chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world: we had grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began: God, who cannot lie, promised eternal life to us before the world began.—(Ep. i. 4; 2 Tim. i. 9; Tit. i. 2.) 7. Jesus Christ was in being when the foundation of the earth was laid.—(John i. 3; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2, 8.) He preached by the Spirit in the days of Noah, before the flood.—(1 Pet.

iii. 19, 20.) 9. Jesus Christ was David's Lord, as well as David's Son; the root as well as the offspring of that illustrious king.—(Matt. xxii. 41, 45; Ps. cix. 1; Rev. xxii. 16.) 10. Jesus Christ came down from heaven.—(John iii. 13; Ibid. vi. 33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58, 63.) He had seen the Father.—(Ibid. vi. 46.) He was from above.—(Ibid. viii. 23.) He was not of this world.—(Ibid.) He spake those things which he had heard and seen with his Father.—(Ibid. viii. 26, 38.) He proceeded and came forth from God.—(Ibid. viii. 42.) He was before Abraham.—(Ibid. viii. 56, 58.) He came from God.—(Ibid. xiii. 3.) He made known to his disciples what he had heard of his Father.—(Ibid. xv. 15.) He came out from God, and came forth from the Father.—(Ibid. xvi. 28, 30.) He had glory with the Father before the world was.—(Ibid. xvii. 5.) His disciples knew surely that Christ came out from God, and that God sent him.—(Ibid. xvii. 8.) God loved Christ before the foundation of the world.—(Ibid. xvii. 24.) Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor.—(2 Cor. viii. 9.) God sent forth his son, made of a woman.—(Gal. iv. 4, 5.) Jesus Christ was in the form of God, and took upon him the form of a servant.—(Phil. ii. 6, 7.) He is the Lord from heaven.—(1 Cor. xv. 47.)

II.—Jesus Christ was, with his Father, the Creator of the world. This appears from the following passages of holy Scripture:—1. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.—(John i. 3.) 2. He was in the world, and the world was made by him.—(John i. 10.) 3. To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.—(1 Cor. viii. 6.) 4. God created all things by Jesus Christ.—(Eph. iii. 9.) 5. By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether

they be thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers ; all things were created by him and for him ; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.—(Col. i. 16, 17.) 6. By his Son, God made the world.—(Heb. i. 2.) 7. Thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands.—(Heb. i. 10.)

III.—Jesus Christ, in his higher nature, is the true and only begotten Son of God. This appears from the following passages :—1. Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.—(Matt. iii. 17. See Mark i. 11 ; Luke iii. 23) 2. Behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.—(Matt. xvii. 5. Mark ix. 6 ; Luke ix. 35.) 3. Simon Peter said to Jesus, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.—(Matt. xvi. 16.) 4. We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.—(John i. 14.) 5. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.—(John iii. 16. See also John v. 17, 28 ; John xix. 7 ; and 1 John iv. 9, 10.) 6. He is judged who doth not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God.—(John iii. 18.) 7. God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.—(Rom. viii. 3.) 8. He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.—(Rom. viii. 32.) 9. God had translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.—(Col. i. 13.) 10. God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds ; who was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.—(Heb. i. 1, 3.) 11. Christ was a Son over his own house.—(Heb. iii. 6. See Psalm xlix. 7.)

IV. Jesus Christ is of the same nature, and equal with his everlasting Father. This also appears from the follow-

ing texts of Scripture:—1. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts.—(Zach. xiii. 7.) 2. He said God was his Father making himself equal with God.—(John v. 18.) 3. What things soever the Father doth, these also doth the Son likewise.—(John v. 19.) 4. I and my Father are one.—(John x. 33.) 5. We stone thee for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.—(John x. 30.) 6. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.—(John xiv. 9.) 7. Believest thou not, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?—(John xiv. 10, 11.) 8. All things that the Father hath, are mine.—(John xvi. 15; Ibid. xvii. 10.) 9. No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.—(Matt. xi. 27.) 10. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.—(Phil. ii. 5, 6.)

V.—Jesus Christ is called both God, and Lord, and Jehovah. The Scriptures following will make this sufficiently clear:—1. Unto us a child is born, and his name shall be called the mighty God.—(Isa. ix. 6.) 2. Say unto the Cities of Judah, Behold your God!—(Isa. xl. 9, 11. See also xxxv. 4, 5.) 3. His name shall be called Immanuel; which, being interpreted, is, God with us.—(Mat. i. 23.) 4. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God.—(John i. 1.) 5. Feed the Church of God, which he had purchased with his own blood.—(Acts. xx. 28.) 6. Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.—(Rom. ix. 5.) 7. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.—(2 Cor. v. 19.) 8. God was manifest in the flesh.—(1 Tim. iii. 16.) 9. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus

Christ, who gave himself for us.—(Tit. ii. 13, 14.) 10. But unto the Son, he saith, Thy throne, O God, for ever and ever.—(Heb. i. 8.) 11. This is the true God and eternal life.—(1 John v. 20.) 12. Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.—(Luke i. 16.) 13. Thomas said unto him, My Lord and my God!—(John xx. 28.) 14. Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth.—(Heb. i. 10.) 15. This is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness.—(Jer. xxiii. 1, 6. See Isa. lxi. 5. Compare Matt. xxvi. 39.)

VI.—Various other Divine titles are attributed to Jesus Christ in Holy Scripture. 1. He is most High:—Thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way.—(Luke i. 76.) 2. He is the Lord of glory:—Had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.—(1 Cor. ii. 8.) 3. He is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords:—He hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.—(Rev. xix. 16; 1 Tim. vi. 15) 4. He is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.—(Consult in proof of this, Rev. i. 7—18; Ibid. ii. 8; Ibid. xxii. 12, 13: compare with these Isa. xli. 4; xlv. 6; and xlviii. 11, 12.) 5. He is the Lord of Hosts:—Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel.—(Isa. viii. 13, 14.) Compare 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8, where these words are expressly applied to Jesus Christ. Compare also Isa. vi. 1, 5, with John xii. 41.

VII.—Divine attributes are also ascribed to Jesus Christ in the Sacred writings. 1. He is eternal:—His goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.—(Micah v. 2. Compare Prov. viii. 22—32; Heb. i. 8; and John

i. 1, 14.) 2. He is omnipresent :—Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.—(Matt. xviii. 20.) Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.—(Matt. xxviii. 20.) 3. He is immutable :—The heavens shall perish but thou remainest ; they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.—(Heb. i. 11, 12.) Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.—(Heb. xiii. 8.) 4. He is omnipotent :—I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.—(Rev. i. 8.) He is able to subdue all things to himself.—(Phil. iii. 21.) 5. He is omniscient :—Now we are sure that thou knowest all things.—(John xvi. 30.) Lord, thou knowest all things.—(John xxi. 17.) He knew all men.—(John ii. 24.) He knew what was in man.—(John ii. 25.) In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.—(Col. ii. 3.) He searcheth the reins and hearts.—(Rev. ii. 23 ; Ps. vii. 10 ; Jer. xi. 20. See also Acts. i. 24, 25.)

VIII.—The honours due to God alone, have been upon earth, and are now in heaven, ascribed to Christ. The following Scriptures will be satisfactory :—1. Divine adoration :—And again, when he bringeth in the First-born into the world, he saith, Let all the Angels of God worship him.—(Heb. i. 6.) The four beasts, and four and twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden phials full of odours, which are the prayers of Saints.—(Rev. v. 8.) 2. Divine praises :—Every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.—(Rev. v. 13, 14. See also Rev. i. 5, 6 ; and vii. 10.) 3. The honour of having a temple :—Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way

before me, and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple.—(Mal. iii. 1.) 4. The honour of having priests to officiate to him, no less than to the Father :—They shall be Priests of God and of Christ.—(Rev. xx. 6.) 5. The honour of being with his Father the temple of the heavenly Jerusalem :—The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.—(Rev. xxi. 22.) 6. The honour of being with his Father the light of the heavenly Jerusalem :—The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.—(Rev. xxi. 23.) 7. The honour of having the river of the water of life, clear as Crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.—(Rev. xxii. 1.) 8. As the Angels in heaven worship Jesus Christ in common with the Father, so men upon earth are commanded to do the same :—The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son ; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.—(John v. 22, 23.) 9. Glory is ascribed to Jesus Christ by the Apostles as well as to the Father :—The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom : to whom be glory for ever and ever.—(2 Tim. iv. 18.) Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father : to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.—(Rev. i. 5, 6.) 10. The common practice of Christians in the first ages was, to call on the name of the Lord Jesus :—And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.—(Acts vii. 58, 59. Compare Acts i. 24 ; Ibid. ix. 14, 21 ; xxii. 16 ; Rom. x. 12, 14 ; 1 Cor. i. 2 ; 2 Cor. xii. 7, 9 ; 2 Tim. ii. 22 ; and 1 John v. 14, 15.) 11. Jesus Christ hath the honour of being the Author of

grace in common with the Father:—Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.—(1 Tim. i. 2; Rev. i. 4, 5.) See also the introduction to several other of the Epistles. 12. Jesus Christ hath also the honour of being joined with the Father in the formula of Baptism:—Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—(Matt. xxviii. 19.) 13. The honour likewise of being united with the Father and the Holy Ghost in solemn benediction:—The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.—(2 Cor. xiii. 13.)

IX.—The Atonement made for the sins of the world by the death of the Son of God, a doctrine to which the whole Bible, as well as the general history of mankind, bears witness, implies the Divinity of the Saviour. We need only mention one passage on this head, and refer to a few others: All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past through the forbearance of God—that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.—(Rom. iii. 23, 26.) See also Isa. liii.; Dan. ix.; John x.; 1 John ii. 1, 2; and the whole Mosaic institution compared with the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Rev. Sir, the above is the substance of what the Scripture advances upon this great subject. How any person who gives the least credit to these several declarations of Holy Writ, can presume to degrade his Saviour to the rank of a mere man, is not easy to conceive. It is to be feared Infidelity is at the bottom. The word of God is not cordially believed. It was needful, therefore, to give all dili-

gence to speak of the common salvation, and to exhort Christians, that they earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints; because there are certain men crept in unawares, who deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. For as there were false prophets among the Jews, even so there are false teachers among us Christians, who privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction; whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and whose damnation slumbereth not.—(See 1 Pet. ii. 1, 3; and Jude 3, 4.) If such is our situation, highly does it become us to watch and be on our guard, lest any man spoil us through secular philosophy and vain deceit; for let the wise ones of the world say what they please to the contrary, we are assured by the highest authority, that in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and that all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily in him.—(Col. ii. 3, 9.) The exhortation of Peter is, therefore, full in point, where he saith, Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen!!! —(2 Pet. iii. 18.)

Dr. Clarke has given us the following compendious view of the Son, Holy Ghost, and Blessed Trinity. How utterly inconsistent it is with every idea of Socinianism you will easily judge.

1.—OF THE SON.

He knows men's thoughts. He knows things distant. He knows all things. He is the judge of all. It would have been a condescension in him to take upon him the nature of angels. He knows the Father, even as he is known of the Father. He so reveals the Father, as that he who knows him, knows the Father. He takes away the sins of the world. He forgave sins, and called God his

own Father. All things are his. He is Lord of all. He is Lord of glory. He appeared of old in the person of the Father. He is greater than the temple. He is the same for ever. He hath the keys of hell and of death. He hath the seven spirits of God. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. He is the prince of life. He and his Father are one. He is in the Father and the Father in him. He is the power and wisdom of God. He is holy and true. He is in the midst of them who meet in his name. He will be with them always, even unto the end. He will work with them and assist them. He will give them a mouth, and wisdom. He will give them what they ask in his name. He hath life in himself. He hath power to raise up himself. He will raise up his disciples. He works as the Father works, and does all as he doth. He has all power in heaven and in earth. He is above all. He sits on the throne, and at the right hand of God. He was before Abraham. He was in the beginning with God. He had glory with God before the world was. He was in the form of God. He came down from heaven, and is in heaven. He is the head under whom all things are reconciled to God. In him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead. He is the image of God. He is in the bosom of the Father. His generation none can declare. He is the word of God. He is the Son of God. He is the only-begotten Son of God. He is the first-born of every creature. Other Scriptures speak thus: The kingdom of Christ and of God. The throne of God and of the Lamb. The wrath of God and of the Lamb. The first-fruits to God and to the Lamb. God and the Lamb, the light of the New Jerusalem. God and the Lamb, the temple of it.

Let you, Rev. Sir, compare the above characters of our Blessed Saviour, with that curious declaration of Dr. Priestley, where he says, "As to the Divinity of Christ,

an ingenious man would easily find as many plausible arguments for the divinity of Moses," and then judge how little dependence is to be placed on the confident assertions of this over zealous and misguided man.

2.—OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

He is the immediate author and worker of all miracles. He is the conductor of Christ in all the actions of his life here upon earth. He is the inspirer of the prophets and Apostles. He is the sanctifier of all hearts, and the supporter and comforter of Christians under all their difficulties. Blasphemy against him is unpardonable. He is eternal. He is the power of the Highest. He is the spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father and Son, and which the world cannot receive. To lie unto him is the same as to lie unto God. To resist him is the same as to resist God. He gave injunctions to the Church. He is the spirit of glory and of God. He knows the mind of God as perfectly as a man knows his own mind. Men's bodies by being temples of the spirit are temples of God. He is the author of liberty and knowledge. He reveals things which even the angels desire to look into. He raiseth the dead. We are to baptize in his name. To wish grace and peace and blessing from him. To appeal to him as witness in solemn affirmations. To take heed not to resist him. To take heed not to do despite to him. To take heed not to tempt him. To take heed not to grieve him.

3.—OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

The three persons are styled, Once—He which is and which was, and which is to come: the seven Spirits which are before his throne: and Jesus Christ the faithful witness. Once—The Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost. Once—The Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Once—The Father, the

Word, and the Holy Ghost. Twice—The Father, Jesus, the Spirit. Twice—The Father, Jesus, the Holy Ghost. Once—The Father, Christ, the Spirit. Once—The Father, Jesus Christ, the Spirit. Once—The Father, the Lord, the Spirit. Once—God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Spirit. Once—He that raised up Jesus from the dead, Jesus, the Spirit. Once—The living God, Christ, the Spirit. Once—The living God, Christ, the eternal Spirit. Four times—God, Jesus, the Spirit. Once—God, the Son of God, the Holy Ghost. Five times—God, Jesus, the Holy Ghost. Once—God, Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Spirit of holiness. Once—God, Christ, the Holy Ghost. Five times—God, Christ, the Spirit. Four times—God, the Lord, the Spirit. Twice—God, his Son, the Spirit. Once—God, the Lord, the Holy Ghost. Once—God, Christ, the eternal Spirit.—(*Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, passim.*)

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERA X,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

In reply to what you assert in your last letter to me, regarding the Miracles of our Blessed Saviour, I argue thus. It is incontestable from the Gospels, that Jesus Christ has wrought miracles, which cannot be done but by the power of God. It is likewise undeniable from the history of the same Evangelists, that Jesus Christ has wrought these miracles as God. In fine, it is a most certain fact, from the same Evangelical records, that Christ has wrought these miracles in order to attest that he was God. Now it is

quite impossible that a man can work such miracles, under the same circumstances, unless he be God. Therefore, Jesus Christ, our adorable Saviour, is *true* God—man. This argument is exact, it is according to all the rules of the dialectic; the consequence, therefore, is evident and undeniable.

LETTER XXVI.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

PAGAN AUTHORITIES CORROBORATING THE TRUTH OF THE
MIRACLES OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR.

REV. SIR,

It now becomes my duty to lay before you some of the principal authorities extant among the Pagan writers, corroborating the truth of the miracles of our blessed Redeemer and his Disciples, and attested by some one or other of the Heathen authors, who lived in or near the period of our Lord's mission. The first important fact is corroborated by the testimony of the Roman historians, Tacitus, Suetonius, Dion; namely, that "Augustus Cæsar had ordered the whole empire to be censured or taxed," which brought our Saviour's reputed parents to Bethlehem. "That a great light, or a new star, appeared in the East, which directed the wise men to our Saviour," is a fact recorded by Chalcidius.

"That Herod, the king of Palestine, so often mentioned in the Roman history, made a great slaughter of innocent children," being so jealous of his successor, that he put to death his own sons on that account: this character of him is given by several historians, and this cruel fact mentioned by Macrobius, a heathen author, who tells it as a known thing, without any mark or doubt upon it. "That our Saviour had been in Egypt," Celsus is so far from denying, that he tells us, attaching to the parts an absurd tale, that our Saviour learned the arts of magic in that country. Tacitus observes: "That Pontius Pilate was governor of Judæa; that our Saviour was brought in judgment before him, and by him condemned and crucified." "That many miraculous cures and works out of the ordinary course of nature, were wrought by him," is confessed by Julian the Apostate, Porphyry, and Hierocles; all of them not only Pagans, but professed enemies and persecutors of Christianity.

"That our Saviour predicted several things which came to pass according to his predictions," is attested by Phlegon in his Annals, as we are assured by the learned Origen against Celsus. "The miraculous Darkness and Earthquake" that accompanied our Redeemer's death, is recorded by the same Phlegon the Trallian, who was likewise a Pagan, and freedman to Adrian the Emperor. I may here observe, that a native of Trallium, which was not situated at a great distance from Palestine, might very probably be informed of such remarkable events as had passed amongst the Jews in the age immediately preceding his own times, since several of his countrymen, with whom he had conversed, might have received a confused report of our Saviour before his crucifixion, and probably lived within the range of the earthquake, and the shadow of the eclipse, which are recorded by this author. Pliny the younger is

himself an evidence, "That Christ was worshipped as a God among the Christians; that they would prefer to suffer death than to blaspheme him; that they received a sacrament, and by it entered into a vow of abstaining from sin and wickedness," conformable to the advice given by St. Paul; "that they had private assemblies of worship, and used to join together in hymns;"—all this is complained of in his Epistle to Trajan, about seventy years after the death of Christ, and which agrees in all circumstances with the accounts we have in Holy Writ, of the first state of Christianity after the crucifixion of our Lord. "That St. Peter did many wonderful works, whose miracles are most of them recorded in Holy Writ," is owned by Julian the Apostate, who therefore describes him to be a great Magician, and one who had in his possession a book of Magical Secrets, left him by our Saviour. Suetonius represents the Christians to have been very numerous at Rome, so early as the reign of Claudius, who succeeded to the empire, A.D. 41, about seven years after our Lord's death.—Claud. cap. 25, *Judæos impulsore Christo assidue tumultuantes, &c.* Tacitus likewise, who wrote about thirty years after our Lord's death, tells us, that Christ was the Founder of the Christian Religion; that he lived in Judæa under the reign of Tiberius; that he had many Disciples; and that he was put to death by the procurator, Pontius Pilate.—"Auctor nominis ejus Christus, qui Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat."—(*Annal.* xv.) To prove that the devils or evil spirits were subject to them (the Apostles), we are told by Porphyry, who objects to Christianity, that since Jesus had begun to be worshipped, Æsculapius and the rest of the gods did no more converse with men; nay, Celsus himself affirms the same thing in effect, when he says, that the power which seemed to reside in Christians, proceeded from

the use of certain names, and the invocation of demons. Origen remarks on this passage, that the author doubtless hints at those Christians who put to flight evil spirits, and healed those that were possessed with them; a fact which had been often seen, and which he himself had seen, as he affirms in another part of his Discourse against Celsus. But at the same time he assures us, that this miraculous power was exercised by the use of no other name but that of Jesus, to which were added several passages in his history, but nothing like any invocation to demons.

The report of our Saviour's miracles, and the confident attestations concerning him, so perplexed Celsus, that though he often intimates he did not believe them to be true, yet knowing he might be silenced by such an answer, he provides himself with another retreat, namely, that our Saviour was a magician; and under this assertion, he compares the feeding of so many thousands at two different periods with a few loaves and fishes, to the magical feasts of those Egyptian impostors, who would present their spectators with visionary entertainments, that had in them neither substance nor reality; which is to suppose, that an hungry and fainting multitude were filled by an apparition, or strengthened and refreshed with shadows. Thus in flying from one miracle he runs headlong into another.

The unconverted Heathens, who were pressed by the many authorities that confirmed our Blessed Saviour's miracles, as well as the unbelieving Jews, who had actually seen them, were driven to account for them after the same manner; for, to work by magic, in the heathen way of speaking, was, in the language of the Jews, to cast out Devils by Beelzebub, the Prince of the Devils. Our Blessed Lord who knew that unbelievers would put this perverse interpretation on his miracles, has branded the malignity of those men who, in direct opposition to their

own hearts, started such an unreasonable objection, as blasphemous against the Holy Ghost, and declared not only the guilt but the punishment of so black a crime; at the same time he condescended to shew the vanity and emptiness of this objection against his miracles, by representing that they evidently tended to the destruction of those powers, to whose assistance the enemies of his doctrine then ascribed them. An argument which, if duly weighed, renders the objection so very frivolous and weak, that it becomes revolting to common sense. For nothing can be more absurd than to imagine that evil spirits would enter into a combination with our Saviour to cut off all their correspondence and intercourse with mankind, and to prevent any for the future from addicting themselves to those rites and ceremonies which had done them so much honor. We see the early effect which Christianity had on the minds of men in this particular, by the number of books which were filled with the secrets of magic, and made a sacrifice to Christianity by the converts mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. We have likewise an eminent instance of the inconsistency of magic with our Religion, in the history of the famous Aquila. This person, who was a kinsman of the Emperor Trajan, and likewise a man of great learning, notwithstanding he had embraced Christianity, could not be brought off from the studies of magic by the repeated admonitions of his fellow Christians, so that at length they expelled him from their society, as rather choosing to lose the reputation of so considerable a proselyte, than communicate with one who attempted to continue such dark and infernal practices. And this opinion is strengthened when we observe, that all the favourers of magic were the professed and most bitter enemies of the Christian Religion; not to mention Simon Magus and many others, I shall only take notice of those two great persecutors of Christianity, the

Emperors Adrian, and Julian the Apostate, both of them initiated into the mysteries of divination, and skilled in all the depths of magic. I shall only add, that evil spirits cannot be supposed to have concurred in the establishment of a Religion which triumphed over them, drove them out of the places which were in their possession, and divested them of the influence which they possessed.

It happened very providentially for the honor of the Christian Religion, that it did not take its rise in the dark illiterate ages of the world, but at a time when arts and sciences were at their height, and when there were men who made it the business of their lives to search after truth, and sift the opinions of philosophers and wise men, concerning the duty, the end, and chief happiness of the human race. Yet notwithstanding their scientific pursuits and the prejudices of several of these men, when they had informed themselves of our Saviour's history, and examined with unprejudiced minds the doctrine and conduct of his Disciples and followers, they were so struck and convinced, that they professed themselves Christians; though, by this profession at that juncture of time, they bid farewell to all the pleasures of this life, renounced all the views of ambition, submitted to an uninterrupted course of severities, and exposed themselves to public hatred and contempt, to sufferings of all kinds, and to death itself. In this class we may place those early converts to Christianity, who each of them was a member of a Senate famous for its wisdom and learning. Joseph the Arimathean, was of the Jewish Sanhedrim; Dionysius, of the Athenian Areopagus; and Flavius Clement, of the Roman Senate; nay, at the time of his death, consul of Rome. The blunt and morose Tertullian boldly tells the Roman Governors, that their Corporations, Councils, Armies, Tribes, Companies, the Palace, Senate, and Courts of Judicature were filled with Christians; and

Arnobius asserts, that men of the finest parts and learning, Orators, Grammarians, Rhetoricians, Lawyers, Physicians, Philosophers, despising the sentiments they had been once fond of, fixed their Faith at length in the Christian Religion; and who can imagine, that men of this character did not thoroughly inform themselves of the history of that Person whose doctrine they had embraced. But to say nothing of the innumerable authors who are lost, we have the undoubted names, or fragments, the works of several Philosophers, which shew them to have been as learned as any unconverted heathen authors of the age in which they lived. But let us look into the greatest nurseries of learning in those days of the world, and we shall find at Athens, Dionysius, Quadratus, Aristides, and Athenagorus; in Alexandria, Dionysius, Clement, Ammonius, and Anatolius, being become converted to the Christian Faith, to whom we may add Origen, for though his Father was a Christian and a martyr, he became, without all controversy, the most learned and able philosopher of his age, by his education in that famous seminary of arts and sciences at Alexandria.

It is not possible, I say, that a few persons, such as the Apostles were, and belonging to an odious and despised country, could have filled the world with believers, had they not produced undoubted credentials from the Divine Person who sent them on such a message. Accordingly, we are shewn, that they were invested with the power of working miracles, as the most short and convincing argument that could be produced, and the only one which was adapted to the reason of all mankind, at once accommodating itself to the capacities of the wise and the ignorant, and capable of silencing every cavil and every prejudice. Who would not believe that our Saviour healed the Sick, and released the Dead, when it was published by those who themselves often did the same miracles, in their presence, and always

in his name? Is it reasonable to suppose, I ask, that God Almighty would arm men with such powers to authorise a lie, and to establish a religion in the world which was displeasing to him, or that evil spirits would lend them such an effectual assistance to beat down vice and idolatry?

I cannot omit here that which appears to me a standing miracle in the three first centuries, I mean that amazing and supernatural courage, or patience, which was evinced by innumerable multitudes of martyrs, in those slow and painful torments that were inflicted on them. I cannot conceive a man, placed in the burning iron chair at Lyons, amid the insults and mockeries of a crowded amphitheatre, and still keeping his seat; or stretched upon a grate of iron over coals of fire, and breathing out his soul among the exquisite sufferings of such a tedious execution, rather than renounce his religion, or blaspheme his Saviour. Such trials seem to be above the strength of human nature, and able to overbear duty, reason, faith, conviction, nay, and the most absolute certainty of a future state. Humanity, unassisted in an extraordinary manner, must have shaken off the present pressure, and have delivered itself out of such a dreadful distress by any means that could have been suggested to it. We can easily imagine, that many persons, in so good a cause, might have laid down their lives at the gibbet, the stake, or the block; but to expire calmly amongst the most exquisite tortures, when they might come out of them, even by a mental reservation, or an hypocrisy which was not without a possibility of being followed by repentance and forgiveness, has something in it so far beyond the force and natural strength of mortals, that one cannot but think there was some miraculous power to support the sufferer. We find the Church of Smyrna, in that admirable letter which gives an account of the death of Polycarp, their beloved Bishop, when mention-

ing the cruel torments of other early martyrs for Christianity, state their opinion, that our Saviour stood by them in a vision, and personally conversed with them, to give them strength and comfort during the bitterness of their long-continued agonies; and we have the story of a young man, who, having suffered many tortures, escaped with life, and told his fellow-Christians, that the pain of them had been rendered tolerable by the presence of an Angel, who stood by him and wiped off the tears and sweat which ran down his face whilst he lay under his sufferings. We are assured, at least, that the first martyr for Christianity was encouraged in his last moments by a vision of that Divine Person for whom he suffered, and into whose presence he was then hastening. Let any man lay his hand on his heart, and after reading these terrible conflicts in which the ancient martyrs and confessors were engaged, when they passed through such varieties of pain, that their tormentors were tired of inventing them, ask himself, however zealous and sincere he is in his religion, whether under such acute and lingering tortures he could still have held fast to his integrity, and have professed his faith to the last, without a supernatural assistance of some kind or other.— For my part, when I consider that it was not an unaccountable obstinacy in a single man, or in any particular set of men, in some extraordinary juncture; but that there were multitudes of each sex, of every age, of different countries and conditions, who for near three hundred years together made this glorious confession of their faith, in the midst of tortures and in the hour of death, I must conclude that they were either of another make than men are at present, or that they had such miraculous supports as were peculiar to persecuted Christianity, and without which perhaps the very name of it might have been extinguished. It is certain, that the deaths and sufferings of the Primitive Chris-

tians had a great share in the conversion of those learned Pagans who lived in the ages of persecution, which, with some intervals and abatements, lasted near three hundred years after our Saviour. Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Lactantius, Arnobius, and others, tell us, that this first of all alarmed their curiosity, roused their attention, and made them seriously inquire into the nature of that religion which could endue the mind with so much strength, and overcome the fear of death, nay raise an earnest desire of it, though it appeared in all its terrors. This they found had not been effected by all the doctrines of those Philosophers whom they had thoroughly studied, and who had been labouring at this great point. The sight of these dying and tormented martyrs engaged them to search into the history and doctrines of him for whom they suffered. The more they searched, the more they were convinced; till their conviction grew so strong, that they themselves embraced the same truths, and either actually laid down their lives, or were always in a readiness to do it, rather than depart from them.

And I am, Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERA X,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

You say that "the word Trinity was not used till near the close of the second century.—The terms Person and Substance, were not introduced till the third century." And what then? Suppose even that these terms had never been used, would it be less true that there is but one God, or one Divine indivisible nature, and that, in that one God, there are three, as Christ (St. Matt. ult.) and the Apostles

express it (St. John v. 7),—the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost,—one that begets, one that is begotten, and one that proceedeth from both? This is what the Scripture clearly teaches, and this, and nothing more, we understand by the Trinity—one Substance in Three Persons. You say that I do not recollect that “Trinitarians are making two wills in Christ, and one opposed to the other.” We will recollect that we are making two wills in Christ, as we are believing in two natures, but we do not recollect that the human will of Christ is opposed to his divine will; but on the contrary, we are assured that it is perfectly subject to it:—“Not as I will, but as thou wilt.” But suppose for a moment that these wills were opposed to each other, would it logically follow, that they cannot be in one and in the same Christ? As little as it follows, as the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the law of God and the law of the members (Galatians v. 17) are opposite to each other, they cannot exist in one and the same man, without making two beings in him. I now, in conclusion, defy you to produce one instance from the Old or New Testament, in which the word God, used absolutely and definitively, in the singular number, and without any restrictive epithet or clause, signifies anything else than the supreme and only True God. Mankind never took the word God, when announced in that manner, in any other than in the proper and literal sense.

You say, “that St. Thomas was the only disciple who ever addressed our Saviour under the title of God.” But even supposing this to be true; what then? Is it not enough that one Apostle should have styled him the True God, and that in the presence of the others that Christ should have reproached him for not having belived before that he was such? Did St. Thomas speak truth or not, when he said, “My Lord and my God”? Next, if the other Disciples did not believe him to be True God from

the beginning of his divine ministry, this only proves that they were dull and hard of understanding, and slow in believing, what the Prophets had foretold of the Son of Man, for which Christ often reproved them. But I am far from granting your statement to be correct; for if the other Disciples did not address him under the explicit title of God, they addressed him under other titles which are equivalent in signification to them: thus Nathaniel in his very first interview with Christ, answered him and said, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God."—(St. John i. 49.) All the Apostles, by the organ of St. Peter, said to him, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God"—(St. Matt. xvi. 16); "And Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."—(St. John vi. 69, 70.)

Christ, as I have often remarked, cannot be the true and natural Son of God, which the sense of these words necessarily imply, without being the Supreme God; for he cannot be the natural and true Son of God without possessing the same indivisible nature with the Father, and of course being consubstantial with the Father.—See Acts xx. 28; Romans ix. 5. There the Apostle neglects nothing to break the obstinacy of the Jews, who refused to acknowledge Christ as their God. First he calls him God, by prefixing the emphatic article. 2ndly. God above all things; that is, supreme; in which sense, the Apostle writes to the Ephesians (iv. 6), "One God and Father of all, who is over all." 3rdly. "Blessed God," which glorious title is given to God, St. Matt. xiv. 61, especially when the praises for ever are added—2 Corinth. xi. 31; Rom. i. 25. This text seems, indeed, to bid defiance to all the ingenuity of the enemies of the Divinity of Christ. Of course Unitarians reply, It does as long as you let it stand

as it has stood for eighteen centuries. To make it speak Unitarian language, you have nothing else to do, but first to alter the punctuation, and next to transpose the article, and to change the participle being, existing, into the relative, whose: this being done, all the difficulty vanishes. And is it not thus, let me ask, that Unitarians answer those Doctors who give us the plain and natural sense and fair translations of the Scriptures? Is it thus they express their doctrines in the words of Jesus and his Apostles?—without addition or comment? (See a flying sheet, entitled "*An Answer to the question—Why do you go to the Unitarian Chapel?*") Unhallowed audacity! Sacrilegious attempt! And are Christians any longer to listen to teachers of this stamp? Deists, &c. may rejoice at such a work, at such pure, sincere, and rational Christianity? but not Christians. This mode of changing, shaping, and fashioning the word of God into whatever form we may fancy, being once admitted, there is no text of Scripture that may not be made to speak the reverse of what it actually does. "The unwise said in his heart, There is no God." You will have exactly the reverse by changing simply no into a, and thus saying, there is a God. Socinus himself, overpowered with the strength of the text, constantly rejected the Unitarian interpretation, and maintained that the words "Blessed for ever," are to be referred not to God the Father, but to Christ.

LETTER XXVII.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

WE MUST ENQUIRE WHO WERE THE PERSONS TO WHOM
JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF FIRST COMMUNICATED
HIS DOCTRINES,

REV. SIR,

It appears to me most extraordinary, that a man of your vast acquirements and great talents, who professes to be a sincere enquirer after truth, and esteems it to be the most valuable of all acquisitions, should make choice of such wretched guides as you do, to lead you to the knowledge you are in search of. For it is natural to think that the most prudent, the most likely way to arrive at the knowledge of the truths taught by Jesus Christ, 1st, would be to enquire, who were the persons to whom Jesus Christ himself first communicated his doctrines? 2nd. Who were the persons whom he himself commissioned and authorised to teach the Doctrines he had delivered to them? 3rd. What promises of security he had made in favor of those who should believe and adhere to the Doctrines taught them by the persons who were duly authorised and commissioned to teach them? And lastly, in what light he would look upon those who would obstinately refuse to receive and believe those persons authorised by him to teach his truths? You well know that the Apostles were the constant attendants and companions of Jesus Christ; that from the commencement of his preaching, till his Ascension into Heaven, they were ear-witnesses of his Doctrines, and eye-witnesses of his Miracles; that he gave them a commission and charge to preach to all nations the same doctrines which they had heard from him; that to preserve them from ever departing

from the Doctrines which they had received from him, he promised to send them the Spirit of Truth, to be their Guide and Instructor; to bring to their minds all things whatsoever he had said to them (John xiv. 26); to guide them into all truth (John xvi. 13); and to abide with them and with their successors for ever (John xiv. 16); and that he himself would be invisibly present with them even to the end of the world (Matt. xxviii. 20); that he would consider all those who would hear and believe the doctrines taught by the persons authorised by him, in the same light as if they had heard and believed himself; and all who would refuse to hear them, he would consider them as refusing to hear and to believe himself (Luke x. 16). The Apostles, therefore, first received the truths of Christianity from Jesus Christ himself, and from the Holy Ghost whom Christ promised to send them, to guide them into all truth. These same doctrines which they received from Christ, they taught to Timothy, to Titus, to Ignatius, to Polycarp, and others, whom they constituted Bishops, to govern the Churches which they had established in the different parts of the world where they preached the Gospel; giving them at the same time a strict charge to commit the same to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also (2 Tim ii. 2); and by the same means they have been handed down through all ages to the present time, and consequently these are the persons whom you, Rev. Sir, should consult in order that you may find out the true Doctrines of Christianity, that is, if you entertain, as I make no doubt you do, a sincere desire of coming to the knowledge of them.

Just after this same exact manner Tertullian argued against the Sectaries of his days. (See his work, *Lib. de Præscript.* c. 16.) In chapter 21 of this same work, he says: "Hence we lay down this as a certain rule, If the " Lord Jesus Christ sent his Apostles to preach, no other " preachers are to be received but those whom Christ has

" authorised; for no one knoweth the Father but the Son,
 " and he to whom the Son hath revealed him; nor does it
 " appear that the Son hath revealed him to any others than
 " to the Apostles whom he sent to preach what he had
 " revealed to them. What they preached, that is, what
 " Christ revealed to them. And this I will maintain, and
 " it can in no other manner be proved, than by the testi-
 " mony of the same Churches which the Apostles them-
 " selves founded, by preaching to them by word of mouth,
 " and afterwards by their Epistles. This being the case,
 " it follows that every doctrine is to be considered as true,
 " that is conformable to the Faith of these Apostolical,
 " original, and mother Churches, which without doubt held
 " that which they received from the Apostles, the Apostles
 " from Christ, and Christ from God; and every doctrine is
 " to be condemned as springing from lies, which is contrary
 " to the truth taught by the Churches, by the Apostles, by
 " Christ, and by God. It therefore remains that we ex-
 " amine whether our doctrine, according to the rule laid
 " down above, may be judged to be Apostolical tradition;
 " and from this (we may judge), whether the doctrines of
 " the others spring from lies. We communicate with the
 " Apostolical Churches, because there is no diversity of
 " doctrine between us. This is the testimony of truth."
 And again he says in chapter 32: " If therefore Heretics
 " dare to claim an Apostolical antiquity, and to say that
 " their heresies seem to have been delivered by the Apos-
 " tles, because they existed in the Apostolic age; we can
 " reply, let them give an account of the origin of their
 " Churches; let them give a list of their Bishops, descend-
 " ing by such regular succession from the beginning, as to
 " shew that their first Bishop was either one of the Apos-
 " tles, or an Apostolic man, who always continued in the
 " communion of the Apostles; for it is in this manner that

“ the Apostolical Churches prove their origin and authority.
 “ Thus the Church of Smyrna shews that it had Polycarp
 “ for its first Bishop, who was appointed by John; so also
 “ the Church of Rome* shews that it had Clement, ap-
 “ pointed by Peter; and in this manner the other Churches

* I. When we consider, for a moment, the establishment, the progress, and the duration of the Church in communion with the See of Rome,—when we see St. Peter, a man unknown and a perfect stranger, who in the presence of a tyrant, and the most powerful enemy of Christianity, came there to erect the first See in Rome, the capital of the greatest Empire in the world,—when we behold the Pagan Emperors for upwards of three hundred years, vainly exasperated against it, while even the greatest monarchies could not possibly prevent themselves from being crushed to ruin by their powerful efforts,—when we behold the whole Roman Empire, which until then had given so many proofs of noble clemency and of moderation, even towards her very enemies, all of a sudden changed her policy and character, and, surpassing all the bounds of natural humanity, rushed forth with a rage hitherto unknown, and for so many centuries, against the children of the Church, and massacred them by thousands, who were her most faithful subjects, without sparing even the Popes, or Pontiffs, who, to the number of thirty-three, successively suffered martyrdom for their faith; and all this did not prevent the Church of God from daily and hourly extending and perpetuating itself;—when we behold, on the other hand, that this Church has been, since its establishment, attacked by a crowd of sectarians, and that we have had the misfortune of seeing in its very bosom, enormous scandals, schisms, and crying disorders, while in spite of all this, it has preserved the faith and the worship of God in all its purity,—what more have I to say, than that no other but God, who was its author, could have preserved it; that it is always a living miracle; and that God alone, who established it, supports it against the power and malice of men? *A Domino factum est istud, et est mirabile in oculis nostris.*—Ps. 117.

II.—Jesus Christ sustains it by his assistance, and by the authority which he gives to it. With this assistance, and with this sovereign authority, this Church always preserves Unity among its members, Truth in its dogmas, and Perpetuity in its duration.—4. Unity. A kingdom divided against itself cannot subsist. Where am I to look, permit me to ask, for Unity among my Dissenting Brethren? Truly, I can no where find it, because they have it not. Always divided among themselves, and wavering in their belief, they have neither a Mother-Church nor a lawful Chief to preserve Unity. They resemble a vessel without a pilot, being the sport of the winds—a family with-

“ shew who were their first Bishops, who derived their
 “ faith and authority from the Apostles. Let Heretics
 “ forge any thing like this if they can. But even if they
 “ should forge it, it would be of no service to them; for
 “ their very doctrine when compared with the Doctrine of

out a head—an army without a commander; in fine, every where among them disorder and insubordination reign. It is not the same among Catholics. We acknowledge and adore Jesus Christ as the Invisible Head of his Church. But this Church being visible, it is requisite that a visible chief should preside over it and hold it together in the bond of unity, in order that there may be always one sheepfold under one pastor, even the Pastor of Pastors. Jesus Christ in saying to St. Peter, Feed my lambs, feed my sheep, strengthen thy brethren, has established a visible chief as his vicar on earth, in the person of St. Peter, and after him in the Pontiffs, his successors, in such a manner that all the faithful with the entire body of Bishops, united under one head, form but one sheepfold, and all the particular churches of the world united to this mother-church, make but one church, the true and only Church of Christ on Earth. Those who have unfortunately separated themselves from her, are but wandering sects, and form no part of the true Church of God, according to St. Augustine, who says: “ You (the Donatists) are with us in Baptism, in the “ Creed, and in the other sacraments of the Lord; but in the Spirit of Unity “ in the Bond of Peace, and finally in the Catholic Church, you are not with “ us.”—(Epist. 48.)

2. This true Church has authority to teach the truths of salvation to every nation; it is “ the ground and pillar of truth,” because, true faith, the faith of St. Peter, shall never fail; it will always remain firmly seated in his See, and it will ever enlighten the world. Bishops established by the Holy Ghost to govern it, being united to the Apostolic See, will never lead it into error; some individual bishops may fall into heresy, but the great body of bishops, united with the Head of this universal Church, never can err, our blessed Saviour having promised to be always with her, leading and guiding her unto all truth. And it is blasphemy to say the contrary.

III. The Perpetuity of the Church. That the true Church of Christ on earth will last till time shall be no more, is grounded on the promises of our blessed Saviour: “ Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell shall never prevail against it.” (Matt. xvi.) Three of the gates of Hell are ever open against this church, viz: Persecutions, Heresies, Lewdness. They wished to destroy it, they despised its Pastors, contradicted its sacred doctrines. But this church, founded by Jesus Christ upon the faith of St. Peter, is invulnerable. Its enemies are always up in arms against

" the Apostles, will shew, by its diversity and contrariety, " that it was never taught either by an Apostle, or by an " Apostolic Preacher. For as the Apostles did not teach " Doctrines contrary to each other, so neither did Apostolic " Preachers teach any thing contrary to the Doctrine of the " Apostles ; nor did they preach any thing but what they " had learnt from the Apostles." Chapter 37 : " Who then " are you ? When and whence have you come ? Mine is " the True Faith, Mine is the Ancient Faith, I have in my

this Apostolic Faith, and ever attack it with all their strength, but to no effect, because Jesus Christ has prayed that its faith may never fail. From these principles I draw three consequences.

1. The Church in communion with the See of Rome being the work of God, we must consequently conclude that every one thing which it commands is holy, that every thing it does is respectable ; that every thing it approves of is good ; that every thing which it condemns is bad and dangerous ; if it be obliged to tolerate in its bosom abuses which it cannot prevent, it laments them and condemns them ; let us bewail them with it. We must conclude from all this, that to turn into ridicule its worship, its practices ; to scoff at its indulgences, its dispensations, its censures ; to put ourselves in opposition to its laws, to its decisions, to its sacred doctrines ; all those, says a great writer, who thus act, run on in their mad career to their own destruction, and are either ignorant, impious, or heretical. " Whoever will not hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen and a publican."

2. When we are united in heart and in soul to the great body of Catholic Bishops, they themselves being united in the same manner to the Holy See, to the Chair of St. Peter, we have the consolation to know, that we are the children of the true Church, and that we possess the true Faith. We are obliged to leave behind us, I regret to say it, the dead branches which have separated themselves from the true Church ; we must attach ourselves to the trunk, to the body of the tree, which can never fall. " I do not acknowledge," says the great St. Jerome, " Bishop Paulinus, nor Vetalis, nor Melecius ; I am united to the Chair of St. Peter."

3. All those who belong to this holy Church, ought ever to offer up to the Almighty their most grateful acknowledgements, that they are members of a Church which the greatest monarchs considered it as their greatest glory to belong to—and which Church (Rome), the illustrious St. Irenæus, who was the disciple of St. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John the Evangelist, called, " The Mother and Mistress of all other Churches."

“hands the original Title Deeds which were left me by those to whom they at first belonged; I am the heir of the Apostles, and hold my right in virtue of their last Will and Testament.”

Since then Jesus Christ appointed his Apostles and their True and Lawful Successors to be the Teachers of his Truths, can you from your heart say, you think he will approve of the conduct of Cerinthus, of Ebion, of Socinus, &c. &c., who have despised the Apostles and their undoubted successors; and without any commission or authority from Christ, set themselves up as teachers of a contrary doctrine? Do you think that Jesus will consider them in any other light than that of thieves and robbers (John x. 1), who have not entered by the door into the sheepfold, but climbed up some other way with intent to kill and destroy his sheep? As Christ has cautioned his Disciples (Matt. vii. 15), “to beware of false prophets who come in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly are ravening wolves,” do you think that he will approve of your abandoning John, and Paul, and all the Bishops to whom they committed the sacred deposit of the true Christian Faith, to follow Cerinthus, Ebion, Socinus, and others, who set themselves up in direct opposition to the guides of his own appointment? This, Rev. Sir, is a matter which I recommend to your most serious consideration.

I shall now lay before you in as concise a manner as I can, the true Catholic Doctrine in regard to the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour, contained in the Profession of Faith, as published by Pope Pius the 4th: “And I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and born of the Father before all ages; God of God; Light of Light; true God of true God; begotten not made, consubstantial to the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was

Incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried, and the third day rose again, according to the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven; sits at the right hand of the Father, and is to come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; of whose kingdom there shall be no end. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and Son; who together with the Father and the Son, is adored and glorified; who spoke by the Prophets. And (I believe) One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church," &c.—*Nicene Creed*.

I shall now proceed to answer the two questions which you have put to me to solve, and shall reply to them out of the writings of two celebrated Catholic Divines, viz., Bishop Challoner, and the Rev. Dr. Lingard, the most able, the most learned, and the most profound theologian of this age. Among the many great qualities to be found in the writings of this great man, are, exceeding clearness and conciseness, his demonstrations being so logically sound, that they are quite unanswerable.

1st. question: "Why may not every particular Christian have liberty to interpret the Sacred volume according to his own private judgment, without regard to the interpretation of the Church?"

A. 1st. Because, "No Prophecy of Scripture is of Private Interpretation."—(2 Peter i. 20.) 2nd. Because as men's judgments are as different as their faces, such liberty as this must needs produce as many Religions almost as men. 3rd. Because Christ has left his Church and her Pastors and Teachers to be our guides in all controversies relating to Religion, and consequently in the understanding of Holy Writ. (See Ephes. iv. 11, 12.) Thence St. John in his first Epistle (iv. 6.), gives us this for the trying of spirits: "He that knoweth God, heareth us (the Pastors

of the Church); he that is not of God, beareth not us; by this we know the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error." —(Challoner.) The reason the Church in her profession of Faith, obliges her children never to take or interpret the Scripture otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Holy Fathers, is, to arm them against the danger of novelty and error; (Proverbs xxii. 28): "Remove not the ancient landmark which thy Fathers have set."

2nd question: "Are not Catholics accused of suppressing the Second Commandment?"

Answer.—They are, but most unjustly; and I cannot do better than refer you to a very satisfactory letter on this subject from the Rev. Dr. Lingard to Mr. Howard, as follows:—

"A Letter on the alleged Suppression by Catholics of the Second Commandment, from the Rev. JOHN LINGARD, D.D., to PHILIP H. HOWARD, Esq., M.P.

"At a late meeting at Bath of the 'London Hibernian Society,' Mr. Tottenham renewed the charge against Catholics of suppressing a commandment. The subjoined statement is addressed by the Rev. Dr. Lingard to Philip H. Howard, Esq., M. P., to whom we are indebted for permission to publish his letter, which will be read with interest. We agree with Dr. Lingard, that such objections as those of Mr. Tottenham have been so fully and so often exposed, that it is hardly worth while to notice them; but as the mis-statement is here concisely met and refuted, and the truth set forth clearly, and in a narrow compass, we are persuaded it will be acceptable to most of our readers.

"'Dear Sir,—Mr. Tottenham's objection has been so often and so fully exposed, that it is hardly worth while to notice it. As the Scripture is silent with respect to the manner in which the first seventeen verses of the twentieth

chapter of Exodus were divided, so as to form the ten words or commandments, every Christian Church is at liberty to adopt that manner of division which seems to it the most probable. Formerly, St. Augustine, and many others, condensed the three first prohibitions, regarding the worship of God, into one commandment, dividing the two prohibitions of concupiscence into two commandments, and thus made up the number ten. On the other hand, Origen and St. Jerome divided the three first prohibitions into two commandments, joining the two last into one, and thus, though by a different arrangement, also made up the number of ten. At the time of the Reformation, the division approved by St. Augustine was generally followed on the Continent; and Luther, finding it adopted by the Catholics of Germany, followed it also, as appears from his 'Catechism for Parsons, Schoolmasters, Masters of Families, young Persons, and Children at school,' in which the first commandment forbids the worship of false gods, the second, the taking of God's name in vain. (See *Luther's German Bible*, App. p. 23. Luneburg, 1640.) In England, the other manner of division, approved by St. Jerome, was followed, and the English Reformers, finding it in use among the English Catholics, adopted it also in their communion service and catechism, and so it remains to the present day.

" ' But if the English Catholics followed that mode of division formerly, how comes it that they follow another now? Because, during Two Centuries of Persecution, their clergy being educated abroad, brought with them to their own country that form to which they had been accustomed; but neither they nor Luther ever supposed that, by such division, they were encouraging idolatry, as has been discovered by Bigoted Polemics of later days.

" ' Mr. Tottenham's first assertion, that what he calls the

second commandment is always omitted in Roman Catholic churches on the Continent, is most certainly untrue; his second, that they know not which is their ninth or tenth commandment, because these are placed in different positions in Exodus and Deuteronomy, is sheer nonsense. The Catholics abroad follow the order in Deuteronomy—the Protestants in England, that in Exodus. Is not the first as good as the last? Both books are parts of the inspired writings. When he says, that the creatures of the Romish system are reduced to such shifts, that even in their larger catechisms, such as that of the Council of Trent, they are compelled to put the ninth and tenth commandments together, and say which is the ninth and tenth commandments,—he appears to have forgotten that there are no questions asked in the catechism of the Council of Trent. That catechism, indeed, explains both commandments in the same chapter, but remarks, that though both treat of concupiscence, yet they should be considered as distinct commandments, because they forbid two different kinds of concupiscence, of one of which the object is the acquisition of property, of the other, the gratification of lust.

“ ‘ I have the honor to be, dear Sir, most truly yours,
—*Tablet*. ” “ ‘ J. LINGARD.’ ”

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERAX,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

In reply to your letter just received, I have to state, that I have demonstratively shewn in this work, that the Ante-

Nicene, the Nicene, and the Post-Nicene Fathers firmly believed in the Divinity of the Son of God. The Apostles, I assert, in contradiction to Unitarians, never taught the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ ; * nor can they prove they did, either from Scripture, or from the writings of the Fathers. It is true the Apostles did not openly and clearly teach the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ upon all occasions, and in their public assemblies, to which Heathens as well as Christians were admitted ; for Tertullian (*Lib. de Præscrip.*, c. 25) says, "They taught some things publicly and to all, and others privately and to a few." And shortly after he explains himself and tells us, that by the few he means the "True Believers," the "Domestics of Faith ;" and adds, that he to whom the preaching of the Gospel is committed, ought to do it with great prudence, that he may not give holy things to dogs, nor cast pearls before swine. But when the Heathens, stimulated by the sublime morality taught by the Apostles and their successors, desired to be, and were admitted into the number of the catechumens, they were then privately instructed in all the articles of the Christian Faith, as appears by the cautionary admonition given by St. Cyril of Jerusalem, at the end of the Preface to his Mystagogical Catechism.—But the books of the New Testament, which were written to and intended for the Faithful, and which were always kept carefully by them as a sacred deposit, and a precious pearl, not to be cast before swine, who would trample them under their feet, evidently shew that they taught the pre-existence and the Divinity of Christ openly and clearly. We find also that the mystery of the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ is expressed several times in the ancient

* By the Doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ, is meant, teaching that Christ was man, and nothing more than man ; so as positively to exclude or expressly to deny his Divinity.

Liturgies, in that part which is called the Mass of the Faithful, at which all the Faithful, and none but they, were present, which is an undoubted proof that they did believe it.

You assert positively "that Unitarians were never considered as Heretics by the Primitive Church;" and I, on the contrary, assert most positively, that I have clearly and demonstratively proved from St. John, that the Primitive Church was not Unitarian, but Trinitarian; and that the doctrine he preached when he wrote his Gospel, had been taught and believed by the people from the beginning. I have, moreover, shewn that these Unitarians were looked upon by St. John, and by all the undoubted successors and heirs of the Apostles, as heretics. As to what you say regarding Paul of Antioch and Photius, I acknowledge they were, I deeply regret to say, not only Unitarians, but Bishops. But they had been consecrated Bishops while they really were, or at least thought to be, orthodox. You know as well as I do that the doctrine of the first (Paul of Antioch) was condemned in the Council of Antioch in the year 264, and that he would have been deposed if he had not promised to retract his doctrine, as Eusebius testifies, Lib. 7, c. 29; but this promise of retraction you take care to pass over in silence. However, as he returned like a dog to his vomit, in another Council held at Antioch, anno 270, he was effectually deposed, and excommunicated.—(Ibid.) Of Photius, Socrates says (Lib. 2, c. 30, fol. 205, v.) that he was immediately deposed by the Arians at Sirmium, of which place he was Bishop.—Sozomen says the same.—They indeed relate, that after his deposition, when the Bishops endeavoured to prevail on him to change his opinion, promising to reinstate him on that event; he challenged them to a disputation, and which was accordingly held; in which being confuted, he was sent into banish-

ment, and at last died as he had lived. You acknowledge candidly, "that Photius was one of the last of the proper Unitarians whose name has come down to us." I conclude therefrom, first, that the doctrine he taught was not the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, of whom Jehovah says (Isaiah lix. 21), "My spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." Secondly, that if there were any "proper Unitarians" after his time, they were nothing more or less than obscure sectaries, since history has not handed down to us the name of any illustrious person amongst them. For this is a candid acknowledgement that Unitarianism was so far extinct at the death of Photius, that we have no account of any person after him who openly defended it.—And (if we except the attempt that was made to revive, or perhaps more properly speaking, to propagate it, at Neocæsarea, in the year before Photius died) it continued so extinct, till Socinus began to revive it about the middle of the 16th century.

I must here remark, Rev. Sir, that in this controversy regarding the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour, the Ante-Nicene Fathers speak frequently of Christ as man; and when they speak of him as man, they hesitate not to call him a creature, inferior to God the Father, &c. &c.; all which is perfectly true in the opinion of the most exact and rigid modern Trinitarians, and they speak of Christ in this manner as often as their discourse regards his human nature solely. This observation is alone a sufficient reply to many questions which the enemies of our Lord's Divinity now-a-days sometimes produce from the writings of the holy Fathers. One of the reasons why the Ante-Nicene Fathers made use of some expressions which may now be looked

upon as rather unguarded, is, because in their days they made no doubt but that every body understood their meaning, as they had then no adversaries to contend with concerning the expressions they made use of; but after heresies arose, they were more circumspect in the choice of their words. I must observe further, Rev. Sir, that according to the doctrine of the holy Fathers, as there are Three Persons in the Divine Nature, or in one God, so one of these Three Persons, who is called the Father, is the *Principium sine Principio*, because he proceeds from no other person. He is the unoriginated Fountain of the Divinity, God of himself, Eternal, Immense, Omnipotent, &c. The Son is God of God, Light of Light, receiving by an eternal generation from his Father all the Divine attributes, together with his Divinity itself. But it must not nor cannot be inferred hence, that the Son, because he proceeds from the Father, is less God than the Father, or that he is inferior to the Father in the Divine nature, eternal duration, or any of the Divine attributes; because the contrary is demonstrated from all those innumerable texts of Holy Writ which I have quoted throughout this work in defence of the Divinity and Consubstantiality of the Son of God; especially if you take along with them a multitude of Scripture authorities, which prove most evidently, that there can be but one God; and consequently, as the Son is God, then he must be the same God with the Father, equal in nature, duration, and perfection. In fine, the Three Persons in the Godhead are all co-equal and co-eternal.—The procession of the Son from the Father, is by some modern Trinitarians improperly called “subordination of persons, but not of nature.” I call this an improper expression, because I am of opinion, that the word subordination, in its general acceptation, implies inferiority and dependence, and therefore, it appears to me, much more

proper to retain the word procession, or generation, of the Son of God, as is used by the Universal Church.*

My concluding letter was in the press before I received your letter of this morning, which is the reason of my being obliged to reply to it in a postscript.

* According to the judicious observation of Pliny the younger: It is better to be guided in our belief by all, than by one. One man may deceive and be deceived; but no one individual ever led all others into error, or was led into error by them.—(*Pliny in Paneg; Trajan lvi.*) Now permit me to entreat of you, Rev. Sir, to apply this rule to the Catholic Church, which has the general consent of all Ages, of all Nations, and of all People, and say candidly whether you can consent to give your assent to its truth. The great St. Augustine, and who was called the most eagle-eyed Doctor of the Church, says, speaking of the Church in communion with the See of Rome, "Rome has spoken, the cause is finished." And St. Jerome, who was one of the most learned among the Fathers, is even stronger on this point, he says: "If you profess the Roman Faith, you are Catholics; if you do not profess it, you are not in the communion of the Catholic Church."—(*In Apolog. l. Adv. Ruffin.*) Lactantius says: "It is the Catholic Church only that keepeth the True Worship of God; this is the Fountain of Truth, this is the House of Faith, this is Temple of God, into which whosoever doth not enter, or out of which whosoever doth depart, he is an alien, and estranged from the hope of everlasting life and Salvation."—(*Lib. 4, Divin. Inst. Cap. ult.*) St. Jerome (*de Scri. Eccles.*) styles him, "Lacteam Elequentiæ flumen," he lived in the year of Christ 290, was chosen Preceptor to Crispus, the Son of Constantine the Great.

APPENDIX I.

A VINDICATION OF THE PASSAGE IN JOSEPHUS
CONCERNING CHRIST.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

REV. SIR,

This celebrated passage has been controverted greatly. Many have been engaged in the defence of it, as affording evidence very favourable to Christianity; while others have opposed it as strongly, and looked upon it as an interpolation and forgery. Before we make any advances towards the decision of this controversy, it will be proper to take a view of the historian, in whose writings this intelligence is found. We should consider the situation in which Josephus was placed; the time when he wrote; and the persons to whom he addressed himself. For he was in many respects particularly circumstanced, and his disposition and purpose can only be known from these considerations; which, if duly weighed, will afford great light to his history.—He lived at Jerusalem, (*Josephus Edit. Havercamp*, vol. ii. p. 2, in *Vita Josephi*,) and was of the priesthood; but was for a considerable time resident in Galilee. By these means, he might possibly have seen some of the Apostles themselves; but could not well have been unacquainted with many of the Disciples of Christ, and with such as were the first proselytes to his religion. The persons who first mentioned their suspicions about this passage were, Giffanius and Osiander in the sixteenth century. They were followed by many others—men of great learning—particularly Jacobus Salius, (*Daubuz. de Testimonio Josephi. Apud Josephum*, vol. ii, *Havercamp*, p. 203,) Daniel Hiensius, Jacobus, and Ludovicus Capellus. To these are added, Boxhornius, Salmasius, Gronovius, Vorstius, Frenchemius, and Tanaquil Faber. The last is equal in learning to any who went before him, and is very diffuse on the subject. He pronounces confidently that the

whole is a forgery. (With him may be joined Sebalduſ Snellius and Blondellus, who have written on the ſame ſide of the queſtion.) And he accordingly aſcribes it to Eusebius. This is very injurious; for there is not the leaſt *ground* to ſurmise ſuch a fraud in that learned Father. I am perſuaded he could not have effected it: for how can we conceive it poſſible, when there were in his time ſo many copies of Joſephus in different parts of the world, to bring about ſuch an univerſal interpolation. He could forge the words, but how could he cauſe them to be every where admitted? For we have no reaſon to think that there is one ſingle copy where this paſſage does not occur. But it is ſaid by the learned Faber, that he has other reaſons for his ſuſpicions, for the language is very like that of Eusebius. To this, Daubuz makes anſwer, that no ſuch like-neſs ſubſiſts; and indeed whoever has brought ſuch an allegation againſt another valuable writer, ſhould give ſome inſtances of this ſimilarity. But from Faber we have nothing of this ſort, notwithstanding he maintains, that the ſtyle differs greatly from that of Joſephus (*Tanaquilli Fabri Epist. pars prima*, p. 129. See *Joſephus Havercamp*, vol. ii, *De Testimonio Christi*, p. 267.); Daubuz, on the other hand, ſhews in the moſt ſatisfactory manner, that nothing can be more ſimilar;—of this he affords undeniable proof, by examining every phrase, and almoſt every word. For every ſentence, and part of a ſentence, he produces parallel paſſages in the ſame acceptation, and perfectly analogous (they may be found collected by Mr. Whiſton, in the firſt of his Six Diſſertations, published in 1734); by which it is manifeſt, almoſt to a demonſtration, that the whole was written by the ſame hand. But as many ſtill doubt, and cannot be induced to think it genuine, and I have not time to enter at large on the ſubject, I am therefore obliged, Rev. Sir, to refer you to the work of a moſt learned French Proteſtant, Charles Daubuz.—(*Proteſtimonio Flavii Joſephi de Jeſu Chriſto libri duo cum Præfatione*, J. E. Grabi, 8vo. Lond. 1706.) Joſephus's credibility is called in queſtion ſometimes for ſpeaking too much, and ſometimes too little, like a chriſtian. But Faber's zeal transports him too far. Joſephus addreſſed himſelf to perſons who were not acquainted with the hiſtory of Chriſt; Faber finds great fault with the expreſſion—"If we may call him a man;" for hence he thinks the hiſtorian muſt have ſuppoſed him to have been a God.—(*Fabri Epist. pars prima*, p. 125. See alſo *Joſephus*, Edit. Havercamp, vol. ii. *de Testimonio Christi*, p. 269.) But this is bringing modes

of speech to a severe test, which they can never abide. There are in all languages, idioms and phrases, which must be taken with some limitation. If a lover calls his mistress a goddess, we must not suppose he thinks her immortal, or that he presents her with real incense and oblations. Our Saviour says of St. John the Baptist, that he was a prophet, yea more than a prophet : yet who ever thought that he was an angel or a Divinity ? By these words were only meant, that he was superior to the prophets who had gone before him. I beg to remark, that it is here observable, that when Josephus begins his account concerning Jesus, it is in these words : —“ When Pilate was Governor of Judea, Jesus made his appearance.” But the history which follows, begins :—“ Moreover, about or near to those same times.”

I may perhaps be thought too minute, yet I cannot help thinking, that this difference in expression proves, almost to a demonstration, that this history always stood where it is now found. The author speaking of Christ says, that he made his appearance “ at the time before specified,” when Pilate presided over Judea, and when there was an insurrection of the Jews. But speaking afterwards of the second disturbance, he varies his phrase and says, “ near or about those same times (the times of the two former events) another misfortune happened.” In these words he refers both to the time of Pilate, and to the time of our Saviour, whose histories immediately preceded. He accordingly changes the word to a plural, as he refers to a plurality of events. Had there not originally been something introduced between the accounts of the two seditions, the author would have used the singular, as he does in innumerable other places (see Daubuz). But, as I said before, alluding to two events, he alters it to a plural, as it related to a two-fold piece of history. Hence I conclude, that this epitome of our Saviour’s life and character was undoubtedly in the original of Josephus. For the author in the last section manifestly refers to two pieces of history which had preceded, —and the account about our Saviour must necessarily have been one of them. It therefore always stood where it is now found, and cannot but be deemed genuine. This argument, if true, (as I presume it to be,) precludes all future altercation, and makes void every scruple which has hitherto been idly encouraged.

The purpose of Josephus, in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, was to take off some imputations which had been cast on that people, and to vindicate their character to the world. For this purpose, he likewise wrote his very learned treatise against Apion, who had illiberally

defamed them. In each of these works, he did great honour to his nation; yet no writer was ever so detested as Josephus has been by the Jews who came after him. Whence could this disaffection arise, but from his too favorable testimony about our Saviour? This is what has leavened the whole which he wrote; and all the honour which he otherwise conferred could not compensate for it. This, says Mr. Whiston, (*Dissertation* i. p. 69,) "bears so hard upon the unbelieving Jewish nation, as that it could never be endured by them. It seems to me to be the principal cause of their rejecting this excellent author." (They repudiated the genuine history, and in its room substituted an idle detail, supposed to have been written by Josephus Ben-Gorion.) This abhorrence has providentially been the cause that this passage has not been obliterated in many copies of the history: for if the Jews in after times could in any degree have admitted the Historian, they would have found means to have either erased or omitted this account in their manuscripts. But we are assured that no such deficiency is any where to be observed. Thus we find that the hatred of this people has been an advantage to the Historian; and affords us strong evidence, that the history in question was ever to be found where it stands. Had it been away, no offence would have been taken by those of his nation. In short, it was never presumed that any external proof existed in opposition to this memorable passage. For the space of near fifteen hundred years it was transmitted unimpeached; and so far were writers from imagining that there was any deceit, that they esteemed it of the greatest consequence. From the time of Eusebius to that of Platina and Trithemius, it was quoted at large, and justly valued—(it has been quoted at large by Eusebius twice; by Hegesippus de Excid. Urbis Hierosol; by Rufinus in Hist. Ecclesiast.; by Hierom. de Viris illust. in Josepho; also in the Greek version of Sophronius; by Isidorus Pelusiota; by Sozomen, but partially; by Epiphanius Scholasticus, at large; by Freculphus Lexoviensis; by Macarius; by Cedrenus; by Zonaras.—See *Daubuz and Whiston. Also Fabricii Bibliothec. Gr. L. 4, c. 6, p. 237.* No extract from any history was ever more faithfully copied, or more repeatedly quoted by writers in a long succession; and to this list other authors might be added, were it necessary, quite down to the fifteenth Century); nor was there a single writer in all that space, from the year 324 to 1480, or before, who afforded the least hint to its disadvantage. And when people began in the 16th century to entertain suspicions, these were not warranted by any real evidence, but proceeded merely upon doubts

and surmises, which were unjustly entertained. They raised imaginary difficulties, and suffered themselves to be too easily disgusted. They presumed that the whole was an interpolation, and founded their notion on the internal evidence; it being inconceivable to them, that a Jewish writer could afford a testimony in favour of Christianity. This internal evidence has been carefully examined; and it appears manifest to me, that thousands of the Jews at that time believed every thing which is there said, and would have afforded the same evidence if required.

In consequence of this, I am persuaded, that our hesitation and diffidence arise from prejudice; and that we have formed wrong ideas both of the people and of the times;—we do not seem to admit of any medium between a zealous disciple, and a determined adversary. But in this we do not make a just estimate of persons and things, and dwell too much on extremes. There was doubtless an interval of many degrees, in which might be perceived a gradual descent from full conviction to a partial and limited belief, thence to a state of suspended wonder and admiration, and so on to doubt, indifference, and coldness, and finally to disaffection, bitterness, and obdurate hatred. I do not mean disbelief of the miracles, for that could not in those times have happened. They were allowed long after by Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian. These therefore who saw them must have believed them, and must have attested what they knew, though their inferences may have been very different. In consequence of this, we may allow the truth sometimes to be witnessed by people who are not perfectly attached to it. We are told that “the very Devils believe and tremble.” We must not therefore expect even infidelity to be uniform, nor apostacy consistent. We find that scoffers have their scruples. Rousseau reveres the Mass; and Voltaire has his Confessor—(under the character of the vicar of Savoy, Rousseau mentions “the grandeur of the Sacrament, and speaks of it as a real and incomprehensible mystery.” At the consecration of the host, he says, “I try to annihilate my understanding before the supreme intelligence.—With awful reverence I pronounce the words of consecration; and I join to it all the faith dependent on my will to render them of due effect.”—(*Emilius*, vol. 2, p. 90.) I suppose “all the faith,” he at least means some faith, or his words amount to nothing. Who would suppose that this could have been said by a person who had before esteemed the Gospel as no better than the Alcoran.)

Thus have I endeavoured to redeem the credit of this inestimable

piece of history, and in as concise a manner as I could, to obviate the objections which prejudice has raised against it. I hope that I have laboured to some good purpose.*

And I am, Rev. Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

VERAX,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

The very words of Origen, wherein he intimates, "That Josephus did not believe in Jesus as the Christ," shew clearly that the Historian did in some degree believe, and that he had afforded evidence of his belief. This is manifestly past all dispute. We may then be assured that Josephus had given an history of this divine person; and Origen had seen it, as is plain, for otherwise he never would have blamed the Historian for mentioning Christ, as the cause of these calamities, but for not mentioning him at all. The first was only a wrong inference, not so much of Josephus, as of his countrymen, and of little consequence; but the latter, had it been true, would have been a fatal omission, an unpardonable defect; for he who knew so much of the Disciple (James the Just), could not well be ignorant of the master; and should have taken proper notice of his character, all which in reality we find done. Origen therefore was acquainted with this passage, and as he tells us more than once that Josephus never admitted Jesus to have been the Saviour of the world, he shews plainly how he interpreted the words, 'Ο Χριστός ἔστως ἡ' (See *Origen, Contr. Cels. Edit. Cantab. See Daubuz, p. 15.*) We find there, that Origen seems to blame Josephus for not attributing the evils which the Jews experienced to Christ, rather than to James; for he was a person of more consequence, and their outrage to him more heinous. But how could he have expected any such thing from the Historian, if he had never shewn, that he was at all acquainted with Christ, but only had mentioned his name incidentally? Origen thinks the behaviour of Josephus upon this occasion still more strange, as Christ had been foretold by the Prophets. But the Historian must have shewn that he was acquainted with our Saviour's character, or how could he have known that it was conformable with the Prophecies?

* Should the reader feel any interest to be acquainted with the different opinions given on "Josephus," we refer him to three chapters "*On the Essenes*," in the Nos. ccxci., ccxciv., and ccxcv., of Blackwood's Magazine. Vol. XLVII.—January to June, 1840.

APPENDIX II.

ON THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

REV. SIR,

As for the Books of the New Testament, what use can Unitarians make of them? Yes, very great, saith the Socinian. If the Books of the New Testament were reformed, and those patches entirely taken from them which were never written by the Apostles, though under their names,—such as the Epistle to the Hebrews, which was brought in after the year 140 of Christ, and stuffed with doctrines of a Trinity and Christ's Divinity, contrary to the faith of Jesus Christ, and of his Apostles and the primitive Christians,—then we might hope to have success in the conversion of the Jews.

But in truth, they are not likely to succeed with their reformed Socinian Gospel so well as they would have us believe; for is it not reasonable to think, that every Jew of common sense would retort the book on themselves, and tell them frankly, This is not the Christian Gospel by which you propose to convince me; this is a book of no authority, but an imposture, of which you are the Father. We Jews, who are spread throughout all parts of the world, and intermingled among Christians of all persuasions, never yet met with these books, such as you now produce, to shew that Jesus is the Messiah. You tell us that they were corrupted by the Christians of the second age; produce copies more ancient as vouchers of this truth. The books which you assert were falsified, are of no authority. What other books have you besides these falsified books, to prove there ever was such a man as Jesus Christ, who died and suffered what you tell us of? Since you accuse these books of additions and defalcations, and all sorts of corruptions, you have no solid proof for the matters contained in them, which you say are true. They who thus falsified the Scriptures, by adding or subtracting what they pleased, or rather you

yourselves by advancing this position, have ruined the entire use which might be made of these books in points controverted between us.

Thus much it is natural for a Jew of but ordinary capacity to say, and to quote his Tanchuma, and all the Rabbins who have disputed ever since there were Christians, against the Gospel, on the score of their attributing Divinity to Jesus Christ. Tanchuma is a famous book among the Jews, and has a passage in it—the Parascha va-elle Massahe—which the Italian Inquisitors expunged from all these books which the Jews printed by Bomberg at Venice; but this passage is still preserved, and is to this effect—that Jesus Christ, whom they call wicked Balaam, taught that he was God; and on the contrary, R. Tanchuma argues that he was a mere man. But should we call into the dispute a learned Jew, who understands the original and the meaning of his prayers, he would laugh in the face of a Socinian that should endeavour to persuade him, that Jesus Christ is not represented in the Gospels as God, or that the Christians were not of this belief till after the year of Christ 140. And he has every reason for it: the learned Jews know well, that the prayer which in the Christian countries is called the prayer against the Sadducees, and in other countries the prayer against Minnim, the Heretics and Apostates, was truly and originally written against the Christians, for being teachers of a Trinity and of Christ's Divinity, and so, as they judged, destroyers of the Unity of the Godhead. And this is R. Solomon's sense of that prayer in his notes on the Talmud. The Jews moreover knew that this prayer was composed under R. Gamaliel, who died Anno Domini 52, i. e. eighteen years before the destruction of the Temple. That this is no fable of the Talmud, which in more than one place (*Talm. tr. Berac. ch. 5, and Bath. Isr. sect. 69*) relates it, they may evidently prove from Justin Martyr's Dialogue (written A.D. 139), who mentions this prayer, or rather curse against the Christians, as already spread and received throughout all the synagogues of the world. A learned Jew deriding these Socinians, would represent to them that he knew not how they could refuse Jesus Christ that worship which the Christians ever since the first preaching of the Gospel throughout the world have paid him, on supposition of his being the true God. He reads how his ancestors saw him adored by the Christians in the first century, and he proves it to the Socinian from the Talmud, (*Sanhedr. ch. 4, in Gem.*) wherein are divers relations of R. Eliezer,

the great friend of R. Akiba, who lived in the end of the first and the beginning of the second century, concerning the Gospels, and the public worship rendered to Jesus Christ by the Christians. In a word, any Jew, who has sense enough to reflect on it, may see that the Gospel proposes Jesus Christ as the object of Christian worship. These considerations I shall leave now to the serious reflection of Socinians.

Of all the ancient heretics, I can perceive none but the Manicheans in the 4th century who dared to call in question the authenticity of the Gospels. Besides, this tardy accusation could be of no sort of avail to them against the constant and universal belief of the three preceding centuries. It suffices for any one to read the objections mentioned by St. Augustine in his work against Faustus the Manichean, to shew that they did not rest on any critical principles; that they did not quote any authentic testimony of antiquity; in fine, that the only proof they could produce was the opposition of their doctrine to that of the Gospels. So certain are we in our belief of the authenticity of them, that I may truly say with St. Irenæus, that it is confirmed by the testimony of heretics themselves; because each one of them, in separating from the communion of the Church of Rome, seeks to prove their own doctrine from it.* To the express testimony and to the unwilling avowal of the ancient heretics, we can add likewise the opinion of the Pagans, and as I have mentioned before, of the Jews, who have never expressed the least doubt regarding the history of Christ, notwithstanding the advantage they would gain by so doing in denying his Divinity. 1st. It is certain that the Jews have never contested the authenticity of the Gospels; as I have already shewn. 2nd. Silence in this case is an avowal of the truth of what I assert. 3rd. What positively shews that the New Testament was known to the Jews at the very commencement of the Christian religion, and before the destruction of the Temple, is, that the Ebionites, who belonged more to the Synagogue than to the Church, admitted the Gospel of St. Matthew. As to Pagans, we know that their Philosophers combatted with all their efforts the

* St. Irenæus's words are, "*Tanta est circa Evangelium firmitas, ut et ipsi Hæretici testimonium reddant ei, et ex ipsis Egrediens unusquisque eorum conetur suam confirmare doctrinam. . . . Quando ergo hi qui contradicunt nobis testimonium perhibent, et utuntur his, firma et vera est nostra de illis ostensio.*"

doctrines of Christianity in their several works, and that the Emperors by their edicts every where prohibited them. I could produce several fragments from Celsus, from Hierocles, from Porphyry, and from the Emperor Julian; we have likewise the works of Origen, of Eusebius of Cesarea, of St. Jerome, of St. Cyril of Alexandria, who have refuted them. The objections made by the Philosophers, and the answers of the Fathers, clearly shew us what the contested points were; but the authenticity of the Gospels was never called in question by them in this controversy; the Philosophers did not attack it, consequently the Fathers did not defend it. But do not let it be supposed for a moment, that the Philosophers had no knowledge of the existence of the Gospels, the reverse being the fact.—Celsus, who wrote about one hundred years after Jesus Christ, mentions many particulars regarding them; but far from calling in question the authenticity of them, he accuses the Christians of having altered the original text, an accusation void of all proof, but by which at least he acknowledges that there was an original text of our Holy Scriptures. The testimony of the Emperor Julian is even yet more precise; he attributes formally the books of the New Testament to the authors whose names they bear, and he combats the Divinity of Jesus Christ by saying, that neither Paul, or Matthew, or Luke, or Mark, have spoken of it, and that John was the first who dared to teach it. In one of his edicts, he positively forbids the Christians to teach the *Belles Lettres*, and to read the parts in the public schools: he says, "They may go into the conventicles of the Galileans, and they may explain there Luke and Matthew." Julian, consequently, did not doubt but that Luke and Matthew were the original historians of the Christians. If he had for a moment supposed them spurious, he would not have failed to have said so, in order to weaken their authority. If he had had the least room for considering them supposititious, they never would have escaped the researches and the malignity of that apostate Prince.

Not only in the days of Julian, but also in the preceding age, the Pagans were perfectly of accord in regard to the authenticity of the Gospels. I require no other proof in corroboration of what I assert, than the decree of the Emperor Diocletian, who commanded all Christians, under pain of death, to deliver up their writings; they were forced to deliver up all the great muniments of Christianity, because it was impossible to refute them; consequently, they (the Pagans) had recourse to violence, because they

could not gain their object by criticism or by argument. Here, Rev. Sir, we behold Heretics, Jews, and Pagans, all deposing in favor of the Books of the New Testament. What right then, permit me to ask, and upon what new grounds, have the sophists of the 19th century to commence anew a suit already decided so triumphantly in favor of the authenticity of the Gospels, so many centuries ago, and by the greatest enemies Christianity ever had to contend with.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERA X,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

The great advantage the Catholic has over his dissenting brother, is, that he receives the Scriptures from the hands of an infallible Church, which assures him that it is the Word of God; but as a dissenting brother may ask, how do Catholics prove the Catholic Church to be an infallible Church, I answer, by the words of our Blessed Lord, "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." St. Paul calls it the Ground and Pillar of Truth—see Verax's *Triumph of Truth*; in which it is demonstratively shewn that no other Church has the least pretension to the name of Catholic, but the Church in communion with the See of Rome, and which the great St. Irenæus calls "The Mother and Mistress of all Churches." St. Cyprian says, A.D. 240, "Heresies and schisms grow from no other cause but because the priest of God is not obeyed."—(*Lib. 1, Cont. Cres. c. 33.*) "It is Apostolical," says St. Basil, "to hold even unwritten traditions."—(*Lib. de Sp. S. c. 29.*) St. Augustine says, "Whoever feareth to be deceived with the obscurity of this question, let him ask the Church of it: I would not believe the Gospel unless the authority of the Church moved me so to do."—(*L. Cont. Ep. Fundament. c. 5.*) St. Chrysostom agrees with them in the very same doctrine: "It is clear," says he, "that the Apostles did not deliver everything in writing, but many things without it, and these likewise deserve to be believed; let us then give credit to the traditions of the Church. It is tradition—seek no farther."—(*Hom. 4. in Ep. 2 Thess.*) St. Epiphanius says, "Tradition is also necessary, for all things cannot be had from

Scripture ; therefore the blessed Apostles left us some things in writing, and others by tradition."—(*Hoer.* 61.)

You have only to give a slight inspection to Venerable Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation, written soon after his conversion, and it will suffice to show you that the Religion of Catholics now, is the very same as was preached to our ancestors by our first Apostles. This is also acknowledged by the Protestant Century-Writers of Magdeburgh, Cent. 6, c. 10, by Oslander, Bale, Humphreys, &c. &c.

APPENDIX III.

OBJECTIONS AS TO THE HOLY TRINITY.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

REV. SIR,

Against these things reason has nothing to object, but unfortunately prejudices are raised against what is revealed, as regarding things which are above our reason, and out of its reach, such as the doctrine of the blessed Trinity.

In answer to which we ought to consider, that if such things were not above our reason, we should stand in no need of Revelation, but only a bare proposal of them to our Reason, made by any body without any authority, and their own evidence would carry them through.

In the next place, we must acknowledge that there are many things in the Divine nature far out of the reach of our reason, and that it must be so, for how can finite comprehend infinite? Who can define what Eternity is? A duration without beginning, or succession of parts or time! Who can so much as imagine or frame any idea of a Being, neither made by itself, nor by any other? Of omnipresence? Of a boundless immensity? &c.

Yet all this Reason obliges us to allow, as the necessary consequences of a first cause.

And where any thing is established upon the full proof of reason, there ten thousand objections or difficulties, though we cannot answer them, are of no force at all to overthrow it. Nothing can do that, but the refutation of those reasons upon which it is established, till when the truth and certainty of the thing remains unshaken, though we cannot explain it, nor solve the difficulties that arise from it.

And if it be so upon the point of Reason, much more upon that of Revelation, where the subject matter is above our Reason, and could never have been found out by it.

All that is to be done in that case is, to satisfy ourselves of the truth of the fact, that such things were revealed of God, and are no imposture.

And as to the contradiction alleged in three being one, it is no contradiction, unless it be said, that three are one in the self-same respect; for in several instances there is no sort of difficulty that one may be three, or three thousand; as one army may consist of many thousands, and yet it is but one army; there is but one human nature, and yet there are multitudes of persons who partake of that nature.

Now it is not said that the three persons in the divine nature are one person—that would be a contradiction; but it is said, that the three persons are one nature. They are not three and one in the same respect; they are three as to persons, and one as to nature. Here is no contradiction.

Again, that may be a contradiction in one nature which is not so in another; for example it is a contradiction that a man can go two yards or miles as soon as one, because two is but one and another one; yet this is no contradiction to sight, which can reach a star as soon as the top of a chimney; but beyond all these is the motion of thought, to which no distance of place is any interruption—which can arrive at Japan as soon as at a yard's distance, and can run into the immensity of possibilities.

Now there are no words possible, whereby we can give any notion or idea of sight or light to a man born blind; and, consequently, how are we to reconcile the progress of sight or light to him from being an absolute contradiction? because he can measure it in no other manner than according to the motion of legs or arms, for he knows of no other; therefore we cannot declare that to be a contra-

diction in one nature, which is so in another, unless we understand both natures perfectly well; and therefore we cannot charge that as a contradiction in the incomprehensible nature of a being three in one, though we found it to be so in our nature, which we do not, because, as I before said, they are not three and one in the same respect.

Now, Rev. Sir, let us further consider, that though there is no comparison between finite and infinite, yet we have nearer resemblances of the three and one in God, than there is of vision to a man born blind. For there is nothing in any of the other four senses that has any resemblance at all to that of seeing, or that can give such a man any notion whatever of it.

But we find in our nature, which is said to be made after the image of God, a very near resemblance of his Holy Trinity, and of the different operations of each of the Divine Persons.

For example: to know a thing present, and to remember what is past, to love or hate, are different operations of the mind, and performed by different faculties of it; of these, the understanding is the father faculty, and gives being to things, as to us; for what we know not, is to us as if it were not. This answers to creation. From this faculty proceeds the second, that of memory, which is a preserving of what the understanding has created to us. Then the third faculty, that of the will, which loves or hates, proceeds from both the others; for we cannot love or hate what is not first created by the understanding, and preserved to us by the memory.

And though these are different faculties, and their operations different, that the second proceeds from the first, or is begotten by it, and the third proceeds from the first and second in conjunction, so that one is before the other in order of nature, yet not in time; for they are all congenial, and one is as soon in the soul as the other; and yet they make not three souls, but one soul. And though their operations are different, and the one proceeds from the other, yet no one can act without the other, and they all concur to every act of each; for in understanding and remembering, there is a concurrent act of the will to consent to such understanding or remembering, so that no one can act without the other; in which sense none is before or after the other, nor can any of them be or exist without the other.

But what we call faculties in the soul, we call persons in the Godhead; because there are personal actions attributed to each of them: as that of sending, and being sent; to take flesh, and be born, &c.

And we have no other word whereby to express it; we speak it after the manner of men; nor could we understand, if we heard any of those unspeakable words, which express the Divine Nature in its proper essence; therefore we must make great allowances when we apply words of our nature to the infinite and eternal Being. We must not argue strictly and philosophically from them, more than from God's being said to repent, to be angry, &c. They are words, *ad captandum*, in condescension to our weak capacities, and without which we could not understand.

But this I say, that there are nearer resemblances afforded to us of this ineffable mystery of the Holy Trinity, than there is betwixt one of our outward senses and another, than there is to a blind man of colours, or of the motion of light or vision, and a contradiction in the one will not infer a contradiction in the other, though it is impossible to be solved, as in the instance before given of a man born blind, till we come to know both natures distinctly.

And if we had not the experience of the different faculties of our mind, the contradiction would appear irreconcilable to all our philosophy: how three could be one, each distinct from the other, yet but one soul; one proceeding from, or being begot by the other, and yet all coeval, and none before or after the other; and as to the difference betwixt faculties and persons, substance and subsistence, it is a puzzling piece of philosophy. And though we give not a distinct subsistence to a faculty, it has an existence, and one faculty can no more be another faculty, than one person can be another person, so that the case seems to be alike in both, as to what concerns our present difficulty of three and one; besides what I have said before, that by the word person, when applied to God (for want of a proper word whereby to express it), we must mean something infinitely different from personality among men. And, therefore, from a contradiction in the one (suppose it granted), we cannot charge a contradiction in the other, unless we understand it as well as the other; for how else can we draw the parallel?

What a vain thing is not our Philosophy, when we would measure the incomprehensible nature by it! When we find it defeated in our own nature, and that in many instances. If my whole body be in one room, is it not a contradiction to say, that any part of me should be in another room? Yet it was a common saying among philosophers, "That the soul is all in all, and all in every part of the body." How is the same individual soul present, at one

and the same time, to actuate the distant members of the body, without either multiplication or division of the soul? Is there any thing in the body that can bear any resemblance to this without a manifest contradiction? Nay, even as to bodies, is any thing more a self-evident principle than that the cause must be before the effect? yet the light and heat of the Sun are as old as the Sun; and supposing the Sun to be eternal, they would be as eternal.

And as light and heat are of the nature of the Sun, and as the three faculties before mentioned are of the nature of the soul, so that the soul could not be a soul if it wanted any of them; so may we from small things to great, comprehend without any contradiction, that the three persons are of the very nature and essence of the Deity, and likewise of the same substance with it; and though one proceeding from the other (as the faculties of the soul do), yet that all three are consubstantial, co-eternal, and of necessary existence as God is—for that these three are God, and God is these three; as understanding, memory and will, are a soul; and a soul is understanding, memory, and will.

I have said thus much here, to clear the way from that objection to receiving revelation (though we are infallibly assured of the fact), because of the supposed contradiction to our Reason in comparing it with our Earthly things.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERA X,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

Pope Alexander the Third says, "Examine the soul of man.... and you will see in a certain manner, though obscurely and dimly, "an image of the Divine Trinity. There is in the soul of man "intelligence, memory, and will."—(To render the comparison exact, it is necessary to substitute sentiment for intelligence, and to place it before memory; sentiment being the faculty of the human soul which more appropriately represents the Father.)—"But we say that the memory is the soul, that the intelligence is "the soul, that the will is the soul; the memory, intelligence, and

"will are but one soul . . . These three things have the same essence, and, nevertheless, the one is not the other. It is the same with regard to the ineffable and infinite existence of God. The Son proceeds from the Father, and the Holy Ghost from the one and the other; and though the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, have the same substance, the same power, the same greatness, yet, they are not three Gods, but one only substance in three persons, and three persons in one only substance."—(*Alexander 3rd, Ep. 32.*) The illustrious Bossuet says, "The image of the (Divine) Trinity is magnificently represented in the rational creature (man); for, like to the Father, he has existence; like to the Son he has intelligence; like to the Holy Ghost, he has love or will." I refer you to the writings of this most illustrious Prelate on this subject—*Elev. Sur. les Myst.* 6 em. de la Semaine 2; 7 em. de la Sem. 14.

I ask, in the words of a learned Catholic theologian, "Shall Reason now acquiesce? Is she not convinced by the force of these arguments? Is she not ready to bury in eternal oblivion her pretended differences with religion? Pretended, because there never was a real difference between them; it is but when reason is distorted, outraged, forced, (and consequently no longer reason,) that she seems to deviate from religion. Is she not ready to enter into the bonds of union with the latter, and embrace her with the kiss of peace; or does she require more explicit arguments to convince her before she condescends to do so? If she does, the Eagle of Meaux, the illustrious champion of Religion and Reason too, comes forward again, and with arguments the most illustrative, though metaphysically profound, removes the barrier of pretended discord, and forms a perfect reconciliation between them. "We see in ourselves," says again the great Bishop of Meaux, "an image of the Trinity; the thought, which we perceive to arise, to be born with us, as the germ of our spirit, as the son of our intelligence, gives us some idea of the Son of God, eternally conceived in the intelligence of the Heavenly Father. He takes the name Word, in order that we may understand that he is born in the bosom of his Father, as is born in our soul this interior word which we conceive when we contemplate the truth. But we love this interior word, and the soul in which it is conceived and born; and in loving it, we find something in ourselves which is not less precious to us than our spirit and our thought, which is the fruit of the one and of the other, which unites them and unites

itself to them, and makes with them but one and the same soul. So as far as a comparison can be drawn between God and man,—so, I say, is produced in God, the eternal love which proceeds from the Father, who thinks, and from the Son, who is his thought, to make with him and his thought but one and the same nature.”—(*Hist. Univer.* p. 180.) Trinity created, image of the Trinity uncreated. We are, we understand, we wish. The connexion and distinction of these three things, represent the Father, his Word, and the Holy Ghost, who unites them : substances in God, but accidents in us. “The Father is the principal of the other two Persons. How is that? God thinks substantially, perfectly, eternally, he cannot think but of himself; in thinking, he knows something, substantial, perfect, eternal, as himself; that is, his delivery or bringing forth, his eternal and perfect generation; for divine nature has no imperfection, and in it the conception cannot be separated from the delivery: it is, therefore, in this manner that God is Father, it is in this manner that he gives birth to a Son who is equal to himself.

... God is fecund, God has a Son; but where here is the Holy Ghost? where is that holy and perfect Trinity, which we adore from our baptism? God, does he not love his Son, and is he not loved by him?... This love is neither imperfect nor accidental in God. The love of God is substantial as his thought; and the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and Son as their mutual love, is of the same substance with the one and the other; a third consubstantial, and, making with these, one and the same God.”—(4 *em. elevation*, 2 *em.* et 5 *em. Semaine.*)

These proofs are both clear and conclusive, they require no demonstration on my part; they, in my humble opinion, point out the distinction of Persons in the Deity, and at the same time, the Unity of their nature.

“The word Trinity,” says Dean Swift, “is indeed not in Scripture; but was a term of art invented in the earlier times, to express the doctrine by a single word, for the sake of brevity and convenience. The doctrine, then, as delivered in Holy Scripture, though not exactly in the same words, is very short, and amounts only to this:—that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are each of them God, and yet there is but one God. For, as to the word Person, when we say there are three Persons, and as to those other explanations in the Athanasian Creed, this day read to you, (whether composed by Athanasius or not,) they were taken up

“three hundred years after Christ to expound this doctrine; and I will tell you on what occasion,” &c. “God commands us to believe that there is a union and that there is a distinction; but what that union or what that distinction is, all mankind are equally ignorant; and must continue so, at least till the day of judgment, without some new revelation. Therefore, I shall again repeat the doctrine of the Trinity, as it is positively affirmed in Scripture,—that God is there expressed in three different names, as Father, as Son, and as Holy Ghost; that each of these is God, and that there is but one God. But this union and distinction are a mystery utterly unknown to mankind. This is enough for any good Christian to believe on this great article, without ever enquiring further; and this can be contrary to no man’s reason, although the knowledge of it is hid from him.” “From what has been said, it is manifest that God did never command us to believe, nor his servants to preach, any doctrine which is contrary to the reason he hath been pleased to endue us with; but for his own wise ends hath thought fit to conceal from us the nature of the thing he commands, thereby to try our faith and obedience, and increase our dependence on him. It is highly probable, that if God should please to reveal unto us this great mystery of the Trinity, or some other mysteries of our holy religion, we should not be able to understand them, unless he should at the same time think fit to bestow on us some new powers or faculties of the mind, which we want at present, and which are reserved till the resurrection to life eternal; for ‘now,’ as the Apostle says, ‘we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.’ Reason itself is true and just; but the reason of every particular man is weak and wavering, perpetually swayed or turned by his interests, his passions, or his vices.”—(*Swift’s Sermon on the Trinity; Works, Vol. II, old edition.*)

St. Patrick simplified it (the Trinity) in making use of a Shamrock: and certainly the Shamrock is an excellent sensible emblem of the Trinity; for it has but one nature, the one source or stem, and three distinct leaves, whereof one is not and cannot be the other. Water, in like manner, serves as an example; for it is the same in the source, the same in the river, and the same in the sea; the source produces the river, and the source and the river produce the sea; and yet they are perfectly distinct, for the source is not the river, nor the source or river the sea. The like argument may be taken from the circulation of the blood, &c.

APPENDIX IV.

THE GENEALOGIES OF OUR SAVIOUR.

TO THE REV. CHARLES LE BLANC.

REV. SIR,

I shall in this letter offer first a few observations on the Genealogy of our Blessed Lord according to St. Matthew. He had principally in view in this genealogy, to show the accomplishment of the prophecies in the person of Jesus Christ, and he accordingly commences by calling him "the Son of David, the Son of Abraham," because to these two Patriarchs the special promise was made, that the Messiah should be born of their blood; and consequently that great Evangelist proceeds through the different generations: "Abraham," says he, "begat Isaac, &c. &c." I refer you to this genealogy, and also to the Notes, on the 8th verse of the 1st chapter of St. Matthew, "And Joram begat Ozias;"* note on verse 11 (*Ibid.*), "Josias begat Jeichonias;"† note on verse 16 (*Ibid.*), "And Jacob

* "Joram begat Ozias;" three are omitted, Ochoshias, Joas, and Amasias, the mixture of the blood of Achab with that of David is the cause of it, God having declared to Achab that in punishment of his impieties and of his crimes he would exterminate his race; he promised to David that his race should always subsist, and that it would reign for many centuries. We see here the accomplishment of the Promise and of the Threat. The blood of David perpetuates itself and continues to reign in Juda; but three Kings of Juda, descendants of Achab by Athalia his daughter, the wife of Joram, are suppressed in the list of kings, and by this suppression a doubt is raised of the way which they might be placed in by the proscription of the impious Achab. In fine, this omission of three generations is not material, the design of St. Matthew being only to shew the Jews that Jesus their Messiah was of the Family of David, though the said three generations be left out, for Ozias may be called the son of Joram, though Joram was his great grandfather.

† Verse 11: "Josias begat Jeichonias, &c." The genealogy of Christ, as it appears by the 17th verse, is divided by the Evangelist into thrice fourteen generations, and so it is to contain forty-two persons. The first class of

begat Joseph the Husband of Mary;"* note on verse 25 (*Ibid.*),
 "Till—first born."†

fourteen begins with Abraham, and ends with David. The second class begins with Solomon, and ends with Jechonias. The third class is supposed to begin with Salathiel, and to end, says St. Jerome, with our Saviour Christ. But thus we shall only find in the third class thirteen generations, and in all forty-one, instead of forty-two; not to mention in these short remarks other interpretations, the conjecture of St. Epiphanius seems the most probable, that we are to understand the two Jechonias, the Father and the Son, who had the same name. So that the true reading should be, Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren; and Jechonias begat Jechonias; and Jechonias begat Salathiel. Thus Jechonias named in the 12th verse, is not the same, but the Son of him who was named in the 11th verse; and from Jechonias the Son, begins the third class, and so Christ himself will be the last or fourteenth person in that last Series, or Class.

* Verse 16: "Jacob begat Joseph." Although Jesus Christ was the Son of Mary and not of Joseph, we are always inclined to ask why St. Matthew has given the genealogy of Joseph instead of Mary? The reason is, because this Evangelist conformed to the custom of the Hebrews, who in their genealogies took no notice of women; but as they were near akin, the pedigree of the one sheweth that of the other; however, if there be any difficulty in regard to it, it is more than probable that this Evangelist had a perfect knowledge of this point when he wrote. The Jews must have known that Christ was the Son of David, that is, that he descended from him; and, permit me to say, that the knowledge of this fact was then absolutely necessary, when the knowledge of it ceased to be necessary, it died away. We must not be surprised at this, for nothing is unprofitable in Holy Scripture; "I am the Lord thy God who teaches thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldst go."—(*Isaiah* xlviii. 17.) But what is useful at one time, may not be so at another. It is quite sufficient that God gives us a knowledge of each text when its utility is required; thus those who have preceded, have had these great lights given them to explain those points, which (lights) have not come down to those who followed them; and on the other hand, those who have followed, have had illuminations on other points, which those who have preceded them have not had. Such are many prophecies contained in the Apocalypse, which regard the last days. Faith believes every thing, but the reason of a faithful Christian contents itself with knowing that God has set a limit to our knowledge.

† Verse 25: "Till—first born." These are ways of speech common among the Hebrews, and only assure us that our blessed lady was a Virgin when she brought forth her son, which is the great point the Evangelist has here in

I shall now say a few words regarding the Genealogy which St. Luke gives us of our Lord, and which differs in many points from that of St. Matthew, at the same time without any sort of contradiction, they having proceeded in a different manner to accomplish the same purpose. St. Matthew makes the genealogy of our Lord to descend from Abraham to Joseph and to Jesus Christ, whereas that of St. Luke ascends from Jesus Christ and Joseph not only to Abraham, but to Adam; the second difference is, that he makes Joseph to descend from David, not by Solomon, but by Nathan, another Son of David; the third difference is the most embarrassing, although he (Joseph) was truly the son of Jacob, he was also the son of Héli (see St. Luke iii. 23)* for one of the following reasons: 1st. By the title of adoption; 2nd. As the son of the widow of Héli, who took for her second husband Jacob, according to the enactment of the law which obliged the brother or nearest relation to marry the widow of the deceased brother or relation if he died without children, and the children born of the second marriage were put down to belong to the deceased; 3rd. Perhaps Joseph was called the son of Héli, because he was his son-in-law. For in that supposition, Héli was in no respect different from Joachim, the

view, without meddling with the question what was done afterwards? But by Apostolical tradition we are assured, that she always remained a Virgin.

* St. Luke iii. 23: "Who was of Héli." St. Joseph who by nature was the son of Jacob (St. Matthew i. 16), in the account of the law was son of Héli. For Héli and Jacob were brothers by the same mother; and Héli, who was the elder, dying without issue, Jacob, as the law directed, married his widow, in consequence of which marriage, his son Joseph was reputed in the law the son of Héli.

See the New Testament translated from the Latin Vulgate by the English College of Rheims, anno 1682.

St. Matthew says, that Jechonias was the father of Salathiel. But perhaps St. Luke could call him the son of Neri (v. 27), because he was his son-in-law, or because he was his grandson by his mother, the daughter of Neri, who was married to Jechonias; this is sufficient to prevent a contradiction.

Verse 38: "Who was of Henos, who was of Seth, who was of Adam, who was of God." An eminent French theologian remarks on this verse, "That is to say, who had God for the immediate author of his existence. We may remark very appropriately that St. Luke here making use of the name Son in a different sense from that of natural generation, authorises the different interpretations which we have given to this term in the preceding notes."

father of the Blessed Virgin. In regard to these three ways of explaining this point, the first is the less followed, the second is the most ancient and the most authorised. St. Augustine, who at one time embraced the first opinion, and to whom the third was not displeasing, returns in fine to this one. "Il revint enfin à celle ci, comme on peut le voir au Liv. 8, des Retracts, c. 7;" so says an eminent French Catholic Divine. The third, is that followed by most moderns, because it happily gives the genealogy of the Blessed Virgin, and by these means we have the true genealogy of our Lord, and his descent from David; but all this is conjecture, and each person is allowed to enjoy the opinion he thinks most probable on this subject; but what we are obliged to believe is, that the Evangelists have in no respect contradicted each other, for as the suppositions which are made in order to reconcile the two genealogies are all possible, it is clear that the Evangelists cannot be proved to contradict each other, which is sufficient as regards faith.

The genealogy of St. Luke was written principally for the Jews, who could not acknowledge for their Messiah any one unless he was sprung from the blood of David,* and whatever difficulties we meet with here, it is certain, that the descent from David was never denied to Jesus Christ, as in fact it is most certain; for those who believed him merely as the son of Joseph could not dispute it, and those who believed him born of a Virgin could not doubt it either—a fact which all the Prophets announced would be the case, which all the Evangelists assure us of, and which he himself declared.

And I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

VERA X,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

* "Close your ears," says St. Ignatius, "against those men who believe not that Jesus Christ was really of the race of David, and was truly born of Mary, and that he suffered and died to the surprise of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and was raised up by his Father from the grave, who will likewise raise us, through Jesus Christ, our only true life. If Christ did but seem to die, how vain would be my sufferings, believing as I do in the reality of his death."—(*Epistle to the Tralleans.*)



NOTES.

NOTE I.

(John xvii. 11.) . . . "That they may be one, as we are."

"If any one (says Origen) be disturbed at these expressions, as if we favoured the opinion of those (the Sabellian Heretics) who deny the Father and the Son to be two distinct substances, let him consider that text (Acts iv. 32.): All that believed were of one heart and one soul; and then he will understand this, I and the Father are one thing. We serve, therefore, (in the sense I have now explained,) one God, the Father and the Son."—(*Contra Celsum*, lib. 8.) And presently after: We "worship (saith he) the Father of the Truth, and (also) the Son, who is the truth; being indeed two things in subsistence, but in agreement, and consent, and sameness of will, they are one."—(Ibid.)

NOTE II.

"There appeared to him . . . an Angel of the Lord, in a flame of fire in a bush;—and the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying,—I am the God of thy Fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

It is the unanimous opinion of all antiquity, that this angel, who said, I am the God of thy Fathers, was Christ—(the Angel of the Covenant,—Mal. iii. 1; the Angel of God's presence,—Isa.; and in whom the name of God was,—Exod. xxiii. 21), speaking in the Name and Person of the Invisible Father. Thus (Gen. xvi. 10) the Angel of the Lord said unto her,—I will multiply thy seed exceedingly. Again (Gen. xxxi. 11, 13): The Angel of God spoke unto me in a dream, saying,—I am the God of Bethel, where—thou vowest a vow unto me. And (Chap. xlviii. 15) Jacob blessed Joseph, and said: God,—before whom my Fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk; the God which fed me all my life long unto this day; the Angel which redeemed me from all evil,—bless the lads. And Hos. xii. 3, 4: He had power with God; yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed. And Zech. xii. 8: The House of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord. And (Revel. xi. 1, 3,) even an inferior Angel is introduced speaking in the Name or Person of God.

"Our Christ (says Justin Martyr) conversed with Moses out of the bush, in the appearance of fire; and Moses received great strength from Christ who spoke to him in the appearance of fire."—(*Justin, Apol.* 1.) And again: "The Jews (saith he) are justly reprov'd for imagining that the Father of all

things spoke to Moses, when indeed it was the Son of God, who is called the Angel and the Messenger of the Father. He formerly appeared in the form of fire, and without a human shape, to Moses and the other Prophets; but now, being made a man of the Virgin, &c."—(*Justin, Apol. 2.*)

And again: "If so be (saith he), that the appearance which Moses saw was both an Angel and God,—yet it was not God the Creator of the Universe, which then said to Moses that he was the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: but it was that person, who (as I have before shewn you) appeared to Abraham and to Jacob, and, at the judgment of Sodom, ministering to the will of the Maker of all things."—(*Dial. cum Tryphone.*)

And the Council of Antioch (say they): "The Son is sometimes called an Angel, sometimes the Lord, sometimes God. For it is impious to imagine, that the God of the Universe is any where called an Angel. But the Angel (or Messenger) of the Father is the Son, who himself is Lord and God. For it is written: The Angel of his Great Council (or Covenant)."

And Athanasius says: "Who is therefore called also an Angel, because it is He alone that Revealeth the Father."—(*Contra Arianos Orat. 4.*) And Hilary says: "Who is called the Angel of God, the same is Lord and God. For the Son of God, according to the Prophet, is the Angel of his great Council (or Covenant). That the distinction of Persons might be entire, He is called the Angel of God: for he who is God of God, the same also is the Angel (or Messenger) of God; and yet, that at the same time due honor might be paid to him, he also is called Lord and God."—(*Hilar. de Trinit. lib. 4.*) And Basil says, "It is manifest to every one, that where the same Person is styled both an Angel and God, it must be meant of the only-begotten, who manifested himself to mankind in different Generations, and declared the will of the Father to his Saints. Wherefore, He who at his appearing to Moses called himself, *I am*, cannot be conceived to be any other person than God the Word, who was in the beginning with God."—(*Ibid.*)

Thus, likewise, the learned Protestant Bishop Bull: "The Fathers," says he, "of the first ages generally teach that the Son of God frequently appeared to holy men under the Old Testament; nay, all these appearances, wherein the name Jehovah and divine honours are given to the person that appeared, (notwithstanding that perhaps he be also called an angel,) are understood by them as belonging to the Son of God.—He that knows not this, is a stranger in the writings of the Fathers."—(*Sect. 1, cap. 1 and 2.*) And Bishop Bull says again: "Wherever it was not a mere angel, but God himself, that appeared, there, according to the unanimous opinion of all primitive antiquity, we constantly affirm that it was not the Father, but the Son."—(*Sect. iv. cap. 3 and 15.*) See Dr. Bennet on the Trinity, p. 62, 63, 64. Compare also Zech. iii. 1, 2—[Standing before the Angel of the Lord: and the Lord

(Jehovah) said unto Satan, the Lord (Jehovah) rebuke thee]—with Jude ix., and Dan. xii. 1, and Revel. xii. 7.

NOTE III.

(1 Cor. i. 24.)—Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

(ii. 8.)—"The Lord of Glory."

(iv. 5.)—"Until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsel of the hearts."

(v. 4, 5.)—"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."—"To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, &c."

(2 Cor. iv. 4.)—"Christ, who is the image of God."

(Ephes. i. 10.)—"That he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him."

(20, 21, 22, 23.)—"And set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places;"

"Far above all Principality and Power and Might and Dominion, and every Name that is Named, not only in this world, but also in what is to come."

"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church."

"Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

(John iii. 13.)—"No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, who is in heaven."

The meaning is explained (Ch. i. 18.): No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

(31.)—"He that cometh from above is above all. He that cometh from heaven is above all."—(See Dr. Bennet on the Trinity, p. 119.)

(35.)—"The Father . . . hath given all things into his hand."

(v. 17.)—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

(18.)—"But said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."

Assuming to himself the power and authority of God. It is the same accusation with that other (Chap. x. 33.): we stone thee for blasphemy, because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. (And Mark ii. 7.)—Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only? The Jews, it is evident, did not by these expressions mean to charge Jesus with affirming himself to be the Supreme, Self-existent, Independent Deity; nay, nor so much as taking upon himself to be a Divine Person at all: but only with assuming the power and authority of God. And yet

it is most reasonable to conceive, that Jesus in this place, by calling God his Father in so absolute and particular a manner, might intend to hint to his Disciples what they could not then, but were afterwards to understand,—viz., that he was “that Word, which was in the beginning with God, and was God.”—(John i. 1.) The meaning of which expression—In the beginning—before all ages—before the creation of the World—before the World was.—(John xvii. 5.) And verse 8 of the first Chapter: All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. And ver. 10: The World was made by him. Thus was this Phrase constantly understood in the Primitive Church: and nothing can be more forced and unnatural, than the interpretation of the Socinian Writers, who understand—In the beginning, to signify only,—at the first preaching of the Gospel. It is not improbable also, but he might mean to give them some intimation of the same thing in that other place (Mark ii. 5, 7), where he forgives sins in so absolute a manner;—upon which, Irenæus makes this remark: “Our Lord,” says he, “when he forgave sins, at the same time healed the Man, and plainly declared who himself was. For if none can forgive sins but God only,—and yet our Lord did forgive sins and heal men,—it is plain he was the word of God made the Son of Man, and receiving from his Father the power to forgive sins, because he was Man, and because he was God.”—(Lib. 5. c. 17.)

See Dr. Bennett on the Trinity, p. 122.

NOTE IV.

“My Father only.”—(Matt. xxiv. 36.)

There can be no better comment upon these words, than that of Irenæus: —“Our Lord himself,” saith he, “the Son of God, acknowledged that the Father only knew the day and hour of judgment; declaring expressly, that of that day and hour knoweth no one, neither the Son, but the Father only. Now if the Son himself was not ashamed to leave the knowledge of that day to the Father, but plainly declared the truth, neither ought we to be ashamed to leave to God such questions as are too high for us. For if any one inquires why the Father, who communicates in all things to the Son, is yet by our Lord declared to know alone that day and hour, he cannot at present find any fitter, or more decent, or indeed any other safe answer at all, than this,—That, since our Lord is the only Teacher of Truth, we should learn of him that the Father is above all; for the Father, saith he, is greater than I. The Father, therefore, is by our Lord declared to be superior even in knowledge also, to this end, that we, while we continue in this world, may learn to acknowledge God only to have a perfect knowledge, and leave such questions

to him; and (putting a stop to our presumption) lest curiously inquiring (perhaps, further even) into the greatness of the Father, we run at last into so great a danger, as to ask, whether even above God there be not another God." (*Lit. 2, cap. 48, 49.*) And St. Basil himself, understands this place, not of the human nature singly, but of the whole person of Christ. His words are very remarkable.—"As to the question," says he, "put by many concerning these words in the Gospel, that our Lord Jesus Christ knew not the day and the hour of the end,—that which I have been taught from a child of those who went before me, is this:—That as we understand those words, There is none good but one, that is God, to be spoken by the Son, not as excluding himself from being partaker of the nature of good, but only as supposing the Father to be the first good; and by the word none, meaning no other first good, but that himself is the second;—so in these words, no man knoweth, we believe our Lord meant to ascribe to the Father the first knowledge of things present and future, and to declare to the world that he is in all things the first cause; neither the Son, but the Father;—that is, the cause of the Son's knowledge is from the Father; for his knowledge is given him from the Father."—(*Ad Amphiloeh. Epist. 391.*) Thus Rev. i. 1 (the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him); and it is most proper and decent to affirm concerning the Son, that from whom he receives his Divine essence, from him also he derives his knowledge.—See Dr. Bennett on the Trinity, p. 155, 156.

John xiv. 28 :—"If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father; for the Father is greater than I."

The sense in which the Socinian writers understand these words, (that God the Father is greater than one who was no more than a mere man,) is very low and mean. Neither is the Sabellian exposition of this passage much less flat and insipid,—viz. that God the Father is greater than the human nature of Christ. The plain meaning of the word is, that God the Father is greater than the Son; as he that beget, must needs (for that reason, and upon that very account) be greater than he that was begotten of him.

"If any one, says St. Chrysostom, will contend, that the Father is greater, inasmuch that he is the cause from which the Son proceedeth, we will agree with him in this way of speaking, provided he grants that the Son is not of a different substance or nature. St. Athanasius allows the same, and takes notice, that though the Father be said to be greater, yet he is not said to be better, nor more excellent than the Son; because they are one and the same in substance, nature, and other perfections."—(*Annotations on the New Testament of Jesus Christ, by R. W., D.D., with permission and approbation, 1730.*)

"He that is in Heaven," saith Justin Martyr, "is Lord even over him who is Lord upon earth (speaking of Christ appearing before his incarnation)."—

Being his Father and God, the Author of his being, even though he himself also be powerful and Lord and God.—(*Dial. cum Tryph.*) And the Protestant Bishop Pearson says, "The Father is greater, in reference to the communication of the Godhead; and I know him, saith Christ, for I am from him; and because he is from the Father, therefore he is called by those of the Nicene Council, in their Creed, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God. The Father is God, but not of God; Light, but not of Light;—Christ is God, but of God; Light, but of Light."—(*Expos. on the Creed*, p. 135. *Edit. 4th.*)

NOTE V.

Col. i. 13:—"Who....hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son"—(*gr.* the Son of his love.)

Verse 15:—"Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature."

The First-begotten, brought into the world by the Father before all ages (for by him did he make the ages—Heb. i. 2); before the whole creation (for by him did he create all things—Ephes. iii. 9, and Col. i. 16). It is observable that St. Paul does not here call our Saviour the first created of all creatures, but the first born of every creature, the first begotten before all creatures: signifying, in general, that he was (before the creation of things) brought forth, produced by, derived from the Father, but not declaring in what particular manner. And so the Scripture speaks in other places:—John i. 1—In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and Col. i. 17—He is (or was) before all things. But how his being was derived, or what the figurative word, generated or begotten, properly and literally implies, this the Scripture hath nowhere revealed or explained. We must submit our reason, as well as our will, to the command of God, and must hear the Church. Upon the whole, nothing can be better expressed on this head, than what Irenæus alleges in the following words;—"If any one," saith he, "ask us, How then was the Son produced by the Father? we answer, that the origination of the Son, whether you call it his being produced, or begotten, or spoken forth (with regard to his name, the Word), or born (the phrase *adapertionem*, alluding, as I suppose, to the Hebrew idiom, *adaperiens vulvam*), or however else you endeavour to express it in words, (it is observable, that in enumerating these particulars, he does not set down creation,) is yet really ineffable and understood by none; not by Valentinus, or Marcion, or Saturninus, or Basilides; not by angels, or archangels, or principalities, or powers; but only by the Father who begat, and by the Son who was begotten."—(*Lib. 2, cap. 48.*)

1 John ii 22, and v. 1 :—That Jesus is the Christ.

That Jesus, the Person Incarnate, is the Christ; in opposition to Cerinthus, who taught that Jesus (the person born of the Virgin) was a mere man, upon whom Christ (the Divinity) descended from heaven, but was not himself incarnate and made man.

John iv. 3 :—That confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.

The learned Dr. Mills observes, "That very many anicent copies give this text thus;—'Every spirit which dissolveth Jesus,' &c.; according to which reading, it is directed against Cerinthus, who separated Jesus from Christ, making him two persons, and taught that Christ was not himself really incarnate or made man, but only descended upon the man Jesus, and left Jesus (the mere man) at the time of his crucifixion to suffer alone; so that Christ himself did not really suffer, but nominally or imputatively only: and the true sense even of our present vulgar reading of this text, may possibly be the very same."

Rev. xv. 3 :—"And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty," &c.

"Thou shalt be in the chorus," saith Clemens Alexandrinus, (*Clem. Alex. ad mon. ad Gentes, versus finem.*) "with angels praising the unbegotten and incorruptible and only true God; God the Word, (the Lamb, in this text,) joining also with us in our songs of praise. This Jesus, the One Eternal Great High-Priest (the High-priest for ever—Heb. vi. 20) of the one God, which is the Father, prays for and gives admonition to men."

Rev. xix. 13, 15 :—"And his name is called the Word of God; and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

NOTE VI.

1 Cor. xii. 3 :—"No man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed; and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost."

Verses 4, 5, 6 :—"There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit.—And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord.—And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all."

The sense of this text is well expressed in Irenæus's brief summary of a Christian's Belief :—"In one God, the supreme Governor over all, of whom are all things;—and in the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom are all things;—and in the Spirit of God, which hath in every generation manifested unto men the dispensations both of the Father and the Son, according to the will of the Father."—(*Lib. 4, cap. 62.*)

This passage is likewise well commented upon by Athanasius :—"The Spirit," says he, "is not without the Word, but being in the Word, it is through Him in God. So that all Gifts are given by the Three Persons ; for in the distribution of Gifts, as the Apostle writeth to the Corinthians, it is the same Spirit, it is the same Lord, and it is the same God which worketh all in all,—namely, the Father himself, the Word, in the Spirit, worketh and giveth all things."—(*Eptst. 1, ad Scrap. de Spiritu Sancto.*) And again :—"God," says he, "both framed all things by his Son, and in (or with) his Spirit ; and in the same manner upholds and preserves him."—(*Contra Sabellianos.*) And again :—"These is," says he, "but one Divinity, (*Gr. one sort of Divinity,*) which is also in the Word, and one God, which is the Father ; existing of himself, as being over all ; and manifesting himself in the Son, as being through all ; and in the Spirit, as working in all through the Word and by the Spirit."—(*Contra Arrianos, Orat. 3.*) In plainer words, the meaning is—God does all things by his Son and by his Spirit.

NOTE VII.

Irenæus says,—“Now the Son always co-existing with the Father, reveals the Father of old, even always from the beginning, to Angels and Archangels, and Powers and Dominions, and to Men, whom God thinks fit to reveal himself to.”—(*Lib. 2, cap. 55, in fine.*)

The learned Bishop Bull says,—“Justin Martyr, in his Dialogue with Tryphoen, expressly affirms, that the Father is the cause of the Son’s being. Upon which account, both Justin and the other Ante-Nicene Fathers, commonly called God, the Father, by way of distinction ; sometimes, God absolutely ; sometimes, the one God ; sometimes, the God and Father of all (according to the texts, 1 Cor. viii. 4 ; Eph. iv. 6 ; John xvii. 3),—namely, because the Father alone is God of Himself (by self-existence) ; but the Son is only God of God.”—(*Defens. Sect. 4, cap. 1, 2.*) Again :—"They also (*viz.* the Fathers after the Council of Nice) make no scruple to style the Father, the Origin, the Cause, the Author of the Son ; nay, to call the Father therefore, the one God.”—(*Ibid. c. 3.*) Bishop Bull says again,—“The Father is rightly styled the whole, as being the fountain of the Divinity. For the Divinity which is in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit, is the Father’s Divinity, because derived from him.”—(*Defens. Sect. 2, cap. 8, 5.*)

Tertullian says,—“We always did, and now more than ever do, believe that there is only one God ; but under this dispensation, which we call the œconomy, we say, that of this one only God, there is a Son, who is his Word, who proceeded from him, by whom all things were made. We believe this Word and Son of God to have been sent by his Father into the Virgin and of

her, Man and God was both—the Son of Man, and the Son of God, who was called Jesus Christ; who, being raised from the dead by his Father, and ascended into heaven, according to his promise sent from the Father, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who sanctifieth the faith of those who believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This Doctrine has been handed down from the beginning of the Gospel.”—[This is a clear testimony, not only of the pre-existence of the Son, but also of the mystery of the Trinity.]—(*Lib. ad Praxeas*, c. 2, p. 501.)

He says again,—“Perhaps you will say, what is a word, but only a voice and a sound formed by the mouth, and, as the Grammarians say, by a vibration of the air, perceptible indeed to the ear, but otherwise an empty and incorporeal or unsubstantial thing? But I assert, nothing empty could proceed from God; nor be without substance, which proceeded from so great a substance, and made so many substances.—Is then the Word of God empty and void, who is called the Son, who is called God?—The Word was with God, and the Word was God; whatever therefore was the substance of the Word, that I call a person, and to that person, I maintain the name of Son is due.”—(*Ibid.* c. 7.)—Tertullian was born in the year A.D. 160, and died about the year 245.

Origen says,—“Wherefore we worship one God, the Father and the Son: for we believe his words, who says, before Abraham was born, I am; and again, I am the Truth. For there is not one of us, who is so illiberally-minded as to imagine, that the essence of Truth had no existence before the coming of Christ in the flesh. Wherefore we religiously worship the Father of Truth, and the Son, who is Truth—two in person, one in concord, agreement, and identity of will.”—(*Lib. 3, Contra Celsum*, p. 620, M.)—Origen was born in the year 185; his father was beheaded for the faith of Christ, in the year A.D. 202. Origen died about the year 254.

NOTE VIII.

The most authentic and ancient accounts we have of the manner of the Primitive Church directing their public prayers, are as follows. Justin the Martyr, describing the practice of the Church in his Days, thus expresses himself:—“The priest,” says he, “sends up praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”—(*Apol. 2.*) And again:—“In all our offerings we bless the Maker of all things, through his Son Jesus Christ, and through his Holy Spirit.”—(*Ibid.*)

Irenæus says, “The Church offers up her prayers to God Almighty, through Jesus Christ.”—(*Lib. 4, Cap. 33.*)

Origen says, “We ought to send up all supplication and prayers and in-

tercession and thanksgiving, to the Supreme God over all, through our High Priest, who is above all Angels, even Him who is the Living Word and God."—(*Contr. Celsus, Lib. 5.*)

NOTE IX.

Let all Unitarians, Socinians, and Arians, ponder well on the following words of the great and illustrious St. Basil :—" If all men," says he, " upon whom the name of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ is called, could have been content with that simplicity of Faith which was delivered down from the Apostles, and not have attempted to make any additions to the truth of the Gospel, there would have been no need of my writing this treatise."—(*Advers. Eunomo. Lib. 1, in Initia.*)

NOTE X.

I am asked by several individuals, how such an union can be effected between natures so infinitely diverse as the divine and human? I answer (as in the case of distinction in the Godhead), I do not know how this is done (" I do not undertake to define wherein that union consists, nor how it is effected"). God cannot divest himself of his essential perfections—*i. e.* he is immutably perfect; nor could the human nature of Christ have continued to be human nature, if it had ceased to be subject to the infirmities and sorrows and affections of this nature, while he dwelt among men. In whatever way, then, the union of the two natures was effected, it neither destroyed nor essentially changed the divine or human nature.

NOTE XI.

Mons. Le Marquis de Salairé has not, in one single instance, noticed the " connexion and circumstances" under which the appellation of God is bestowed on Christ? is he not bound to prove, by the Scriptures, even as interpreted according to the universal laws of explaining human language (I maintain that no power on earth has a right to interpret Scripture but the Catholic Church), that the New Testament writers have not ascribed to Christ creative power, omniscience, omnipotence, divine worship, divine honours, and eternal existence? I call on Mons. Le Marquis de Salairé to shew, that these attributes are not ascribed to Christ; if he can do but this, he will make the Christian world Unitarian. Let him meet fairly and openly the points in

dispute—any other way will not become his high character and talents ; and I will here tell him, without fear of contradiction, that the sole fact of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, will ever stand an irresistible evidence of the Divinity of Jesus Christ. Mons. Le Marquis de Salairé says, that Unitarians object to the form of Baptism, that the use of it does not appear in the Acts of the Apostles. This objection, I think, is well answered by Mr. Bingham, (*Vindicat.* pp. 35—41,—particularly from Acts xix.) ; and I beg here to put the following question to him : was the Hymn, which as Pliny tells us in his noted Epistle was sung to Christ, *Quasi deo*, novel in the time of Samosata ?

NOTE XII.

Q. "I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God"—(1 John xx., v. 17), what is the meaning of this sentence—if it does not imply that we have the same relation to the Creator as Jesus ?

A. It implies that we have the same relation to the Creator as Jesus had, inasmuch as he was man and the Son of the Virgin, but nothing more.

Q. "God gave his life !" Is not this shocking ?

A. Only when misunderstood. He who was both God and man gave his life as man, not as God.

Q. The Trinitarian doctrine confounds the creature with the Creator, and is, therefore, Idolatry ?

A. It does not confound them, because it teaches that in Christ there were two distinct natures—inasmuch as he had the nature of God, he was one with the Creator, inasmuch as he had the nature of man, he was a creature.

NOTE XIII.

I have received the letter which the Rev. T. G. Jones, Unitarian minister, left at my publishers for me, and I reply to it as follows, by informing him, that of the five Books of Ecclesiastical Commentaries of Hegesippus, nothing more survives than a few sentences cited by Eusebius in different parts of his history, which, all brought together, might, perhaps, fill two pages and-a-half in a folio of a middling size. In these fragments no mention occurs of the Ebionæan heresy. It is, therefore, to be concluded, that the Ebionites were not mentioned, or not mentioned as Heretics, in the entire work ; but where is the cogency of this argument ? In certain fragments of the work of Hegesippus, the Ebionites are not mentioned as heretics ; therefore Mr. Jones concludes that the author was himself an Ebionite. Scanty as these fragments are, Pro-

vidence has so ordered that clear evidence is to be found, that Hegesippus was no Ebionite, and that his testimony is to be found in them in favour of the Catholic Faith. That he was no Ebionite appears with the highest evidence from a little circumstance incidentally mentioned by Eusebius, which those who only look through ancient writers may be very apt to overlook. Eusebius relates, that Hegesippus cited the Proverbs of Solomon, by a title which implied his acknowledgment of the Book.—(*Euseb. Ecc. Hist. Lib. 4, c. 22.*) Whereas, the Ebionites acknowledged no part of the Old Testament but the Pentateuch, now the whole of that. Hegesippus's testimony in favour of the Catholic Faith is contained in his declaration—"that he found in all the Churches which he visited on his journey to Rome, that faith maintained which was agreeable to the Law, the Prophets, and the Doctrine of our Lord."—(*Euseb. Ecc. Hist. Lib. 4, C. 22.*) Hegesippus, in this declaration, bears his testimony to the faith of all Churches at this time, that it was the faith which Christ had taught. But what faith the Churches at this time maintained, let Irenæus and Justin testify. And where is the Unitarian who will have the hardihood to affirm, that the faith, described as the Catholic Faith by Irenæus and by Justin, was any other than Trinitarian. So much for Hegesippus—he lived in the second century, and is supposed to have died about A.D. 180.

Justin wrote about the year A.D. 140, i. e. about eighty years after the death of the Apostles.

Ebion in his notions of the Redeemer, seems to have been a mere Cerinthian. Epiphanius and Irenæus say, that he held the Cerinthian doctrine of a union of Jesus with a super-angelic being. The Cerinthian doctrine was, that this union commenced at our Lord's Baptism.

NOTE XIV.

"The doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul, and the Resurrection from the Dead, which were denied by the Sadducees, who required an express text of Moses for the proof of these doctrines, and declared that there were not any such to be found in the writings of Moses,—our Blessed Saviour proves it against them by these words, which at once silenced them, and raised the admiration of the multitude; I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; but God is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living.—(Matt. xxii. 32.) This proof was a known and necessary consequence from that text out of the Law, which he inferred according to the received method among the Jews. For the Jews at this day, do gather the same doctrines from the same words.—(Exod. iii. 6, 15, 16.) See Mede's Works, p. 891."—(*Atter's Judgment*, p. 23.)

NOTE XV.

Barnabas—Whether the Epistle,—(For the authority of the Epistle of Barnabas, see Bishop Bull's Defence of the Nicene Faith, chap. 2, sect. 2; and Primitive and Apostolical Tradition, chap. 1, sect. 3. See also Archbishop Wake's Apostolical Fathers. See moreover Dr. Clarke's Reflections on Amyntor, where he says: "The Epistle of Barnabas is also without controversy an ancient work of the Apostolic age, being quoted by almost all the primitive Fathers. Dr. Priestley himself quotes it among the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. See Corruptions of Christianity, vol. 1, p. 218.)—which goes by his name, be genuine or not, there is no doubt but it is extremely ancient, and goes back nearly as far as the Apostolic times. He himself, if he were the author of it, was one of the seventy Disciples. Be this, however, as it may, he bears clear testimony to the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour:—"The Lord," says he, "submitted to suffer for our souls, although he be the Lord of the whole earth, unto whom God said the day before the world was finished, 'Let us make man after our image and our likeness.'"—(Sect. 5.)

2.—"For if he had not come in the flesh, how could we mortals, seeing him, have been preserved; when they who behold the sun, which is to perish, and is the work of his hands, are unable to look directly against its rays."—(Ibid.) 3.—"Thus the Scripture saith concerning us, where it introduceth the Father speaking to the Son: 'Let us make man after our likeness and similitude; and let him have dominion over the beasts of the earth, and over the fowls of the air, and over the fish of the sea.' And when the Lord saw the Man which he had formed, that, behold, he was very good, he said, increase and multiply, and replenish the earth.' And thus he spoke to his Son."—(Sect. 6.)

4.—"If then the Son of God, being Lord, and being to judge the quick and the dead, suffered, to the end that his wounds might make us alive,—let us believe that the Son of God had no power to suffer, had it not been on our account."—(Sect. 7.)

5.—"Meanwhile, thou hast (the whole doctrine) concerning the Majesty of Christ; how 'all things were made for him and through him; to whom be honour, power, and glory, now and for ever.'"—(Sect. 12.)

It is evident from these passages, that we have at least one instance of a Christian, converted from among the Jews in the Apostolic age, who believed in the Pre-existence and Divinity of our Blessed Saviour. See Bishop Horsley's Tracts, pp. 163—169.

6.—Hermas is supposed to be the same whom St. Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Romans. We have one work of his, entitled, "The Shepherd;"—(For the authority of this work, see Archbishop Wake's Apostolical Fathers;

Bishop Bull's Defence of the Nicene Faith, chap. 2, sect. 3; and Dr. Clarke's Reflections on Amyntor, where he says: "The Pastor Hermas is incontestably a most ancient work, being cited by almost all the Primitive Fathers extant, that lived in or near the Second Century."—in which also is asserted, the Pre-existence and Divinity of the Son of God: "The Son of God," says he, "is indeed more ancient than any creature; insomuch that he was in Council with his Father at the creation of all things."—(*Sim. 9, sect. 12.*)

7.—The name of the Son of God is great and without bounds, and the whole earth is supported by it.—(*Sim. 9, sect. 14.*)

St. Clemens Romanus was a convert and disciple of the Apostles.—(Phil. iv. 3.) (For the authority of St. Clement's Epistles, see Archbishop Wake's Apostolical Fathers; Bishop Bull's Defence of the Nicene Faith, cap. 3, sect. 1.; and Dr. Clarke's Reflections on Amyntor. See also Eusebius's Eccl. Hist. L. 3, cap. 38. The second is supposed by some to be spurious.) He died a martyr, A.D. 100. One complete epistle, and part of another, are still extant, of his writings; whence, it evidently appears, he was an advocate for the same doctrine as those who had gone before him: "The Sceptre of the Majesty of God," says he, "our Lord Jesus Christ, came not in the shew of pride and arrogance, though he had it in his power; but in humility, as the Holy Spirit spake before concerning him."—(*1st Epist. sect. 16.*) Is not this an allusion to that celebrated place of St. Paul,—(See this passage of St. Paul, vindicated from the erroneous interpretation of Dr. Priestley, in Burgh's Sequel, p. 9—13.)—where he says, "That our Lord Jesus Christ, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God?" And doth not this shew, that, according to St. Clement, our Blessed Saviour was in being before he chose the form in which he appeared in the World? "Have we not all one God, and one Christ?" Is not one Spirit of Grace poured upon us all?—(Ibid. sect. 46.) "God liveth, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit."—(*Basil, vol. 2, p. 358.*) "All these has the Great Creator and Lord of all commanded to observe peace and concord,—being good to all,—but especially to us, who flee to his mercy, through our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom be glory and majesty for ever and ever. Amen."—(*1 Ep. sect. 20.*) "From him (Abraham) came our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the flesh." Is not this a plain allusion to St. Paul's distinction?—(Rom. ix. 5;—Ibid. sect. 32.)

"Let us pray to our Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood was given for us."—(Ibid. sect. 21.)

"Wherein must we confess Christ? In doing these things which he saith, and not disobeying his commandments; by worshipping him, not with our lips only, but with all our heart, and with all our mind."—(*2 Epist. sect. 2.*) Our one Lord Jesus Christ, who has saved us, being first a Spirit, was made flesh, and so called us.—(Ibid. sect. 9.)

"We ought to think of Jesus Christ as God; as of the Judge of the quick and of the dead."—(2 *Epist. sect. 1.*)

Besides all these passages descriptive of the sentiments of St. Clement, respecting the person of our Blessed Saviour, it is evident from several other internal marks, that he ranked not with any of the Unitarians of the day in which he lived. It is plain he was no Ebionite, because he quotes St. Paul's Epistles, which they rejected. He was no Nazarene, because he quotes the Gospels (all but St. John's, which was not then written,) according to our copies, which the Nazarenes did not do. Nor was he a Cerinthian, because he quotes the writings of the old Testament with approbation, which these Heretics rejected.

An eminent Protestant Divine says, "St. Ignatius was a disciple of St. John; was appointed Bishop of Antioch by St. Paul; was approved of by St. Peter; (behold here the supremacy of St. Peter, as head of the Universal Church;) and had the honor of dying a martyr in the year of our Lord 107." He is moreover said to have been the child whom our Blessed Saviour took up in his arms, and pointed out as an example of innocence. Whether this be true or not, it shews the opinion the ancients had of his piety. Seven of his genuine Epistles are still extant, and are generally considered as perfectly orthodox.

Dr. Priestley seems to allow, that these Epistles, according to our present copies of them, do contain the doctrine of Christ's Divinity, but being at a loss to get over this difficulty, he boldly denies their authenticity. If Dr. Priestley's ipse dixit may pass for argument and truth, the seven Epistles of St. Ignatius are generally given up by the learned. But—is it so? Is this the fact? By no means. Dr. Priestley may have given them up, because they subverted that system of doctrine which he was determined to support at all hazards; and a few others may join him in crying them down, because they maintain the three orders, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; but that they are generally given up by the learned, is a notorious falsehood. For it is well known that a large majority of the learned in Ecclesiastical antiquity, consider the Epistles in question as the genuine composition of the pious Bishop and Martyr to whom they are ascribed; nor is there any good reason to think that they have suffered more by the hand of time or interpolation than other writings of the same antiquity. These celebrated Epistles are considered as genuine, for any thing that appears to the contrary, by all the learned Fathers of the Church for the first four or five centuries; by these very Fathers from whom we receive the Holy Scriptures themselves as the word of God. And of those learned men who have lived since the Reformation, they have been considered as genuine by some of the most celebrated in this department of literature. In this number are to be ranked the names of Fabricius—I. Vassius—Usher—Hammond—Brucker—Huetius—Ittigius—Petavius—

Grotius—Pearson—Bull—Cave—Wake—Cotelierius—Grabe—Dupin—Fleury—Tillemont—Bochart—Le Clerc—Nelson—Reeves—Leslie—Hicken—Marshal—Beveridge—Chillingworth—Waterland—Zanchius—Buddæus—Bishop—Berriman—Clarke—Mosheim—Lardner—Jortin; and indeed the great body of the learned in every age, have been fully of opinion that these celebrated Epistles are the genuine work of the author to whom they are ascribed. (See Bishop Horsley's Tracts, p. 120; Archbishop Wake's Apostolical Fathers; Dr. Clarke's Reflections on Amyntor; and Bishop Pearson's Vindiciæ. See also Bishop Bull's Defence of the Nicene Faith, c. 2, sect. 6; likewise Eusebius, Eccl. Hist., book 3, chap. 36; consult also the Notes to Kett's Sermons, p. 21—24.)

"Dr. Priestley is certainly in the right to reprobate these Epistles if he can," says an unknown author; "they subvert all his theology and history."—(*Bishop Horsley's Tracts*, p. 300.) With what face then could Dr. Priestley have said that they are generally given up by the learned? The case is plain—It did not suit the Doctor's hypothesis to admit them. But then—where is Truth, Fidelity, and Honour? It is by arts like these, Voltaire explodes even the Bible itself? But I will produce a few passages from these Epistles, which serve directly or indirectly my present purpose.

"According to the will of the Father, and Jesus Christ our God."—(*Ep. ad Ep. introd.*)

"There is one Physician, both fleshly and spiritual; made and not made; God incarnate; true life in death; both of Mary and of God; first passible, then impassible, even Jesus Christ our Lord."—(*Ibid. Sect. 7.*)

"Nothing is concealed from the Lord, but even our secrets are nigh unto him."—(*Ibid. Sect. 15.*)

"Our Lord Jesus Christ was, according to the dispensation of God, conceived in the womb of Mary, of the seed of David, by the Holy Ghost."—(*Ibid. Sect. 18.*)

"Now the virginity of Mary, and He who was born of her, were kept in secret from the Prince of the World, as was also the death of our Lord; three of the mysteries the most spoken of throughout the world, yet done in secret by God."—(*Ibid. Sect. 19.*)

"Our God, Jesus Christ, being in the Father, doth so much the more appear."—(*Ep. ad Rom. Sect. 3.*)

"Pray unto Christ for me."—(*Ibid. Sect. 4.*)

"Ignatius—to the Church of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ—by the Holy Ghost."—(*Ep. ad Mag. Introd.*)

"Permit me to imitate the Passion of Christ, my God."—(*Ibid. Sect. 6.*)

"I exhort you, that you study to do all things in divine concord; your Bishop presiding in the place of God; your Presbyters in the place of the council of the Apostles; and your Deacons, most dear to me, being en-

trusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ; who was with the Father before all ages, and appeared in the end to us."—(*Epistle to the Magnesians, Sec. 6.*)

"There is one God, who has manifested himself by Jesus Christ his Son, who is his Eternal Word, not coming forth from silence, who in all things pleased him that sent him."—(*Ibid. Sect. 3.*)

"Study to be confirmed in the doctrine of our Lord, and of his Apostles; that so, whatsoever ye do, ye may prosper both in body and spirit; in faith and charity; in the Son and in the Father and in the Holy Spirit."—(*Ibid. Sect. 13.*)

"I glorify Jesus Christ, the God who has thus filled you with wisdom."—(*Epist. ad Smyr. Sect. 1.*)

"Consider the times; and expect him, who is above all times, eternal, invisible, though for our sakes made visible; impassible, yet for us subject to sufferings; enduring all manner of ways for our salvation."—(*Epistle to Polycarp, Sect. 3.*)

"I wish you all happiness in our God, Jesus Christ."—(*Ibid. Sect. 8.*)

"All these things (Jesus Christ) suffered for us that we might be saved, and he did truly suffer, as also he did truly raise up himself."—(*Epist. ad Smyrn. Sect. 2.*)

"After his resurrection he eat and drank with them, as he was flesh; although as to his spirit he was united to his Father."—(*Epist. ad Smyr. Sect. 3.*)

St. Ignatius was martyred A.D. 107. There is a conversation recorded which passed between him and Trajan, which is strongly expressive of his belief in our blessed Saviour's Divinity, among other questions which the Emperor put to this venerable Bishop; one was, "whether he carried Christ within him?" He replied, "I do; for it is written, 'I will dwell in them and walk in them.'"—(2 Cor. vi. 16, and Levit. xxvi. 12.) The Emperor then ordered, that he should be carried to Rome, and be there devoured by wild beasts. Upon hearing this sentence, the venerable man cried out with joy, "I thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast vouchsafed to honour me with a perfect love towards thee, and hast made me to be put in iron bonds with thine Apostle Paul. The relation of his martyrdom further tells us, that just before he was delivered to the beasts, all the brethren kneeling down with him, he prayed to the Son of God!! in behalf of all the Churches. This same pious relation concludes with an address to the Holy Trinity—"Christ Jesus our Lord; by whom, and with whom, all glory and power, be to the Father, with the blessed spirit for ever. Amen."

St. Polycarp was a Disciple of St. John, and by him made Bishop of Smyrna, A.D. 82. He was burnt alive in the 100th year of his age. St. Irenæus assures us, that St. Polycarp always taught those things which he had learned from the Apostles, and which he delivered to the Church, and

which alone are true. All the Churches in Asia bear witness to this. His genuine writings are only one Epistle to the Philippians. In this, however, he is not silent concerning the dignity of his blessed Master:—"Wherefore," says this good man, "girding up the loins of your mind, serve the Lord with fear, and truth; laying aside all empty and vain speech, and the error of many; believing in him that raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and hath given him glory and a throne at his right hand; to whom all things are made subject, both that are in Heaven, and that are in the earth; whom every living creature shall worship; who shall come to be the Judge of quick and dead."—(*Epist. ad Philip. Sect. 2.*)

"Now the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and he himself, who is our everlasting High Priest, the Son of God, even Jesus Christ, build you up in faith and in truth."—(*Ibid. Sect. 12.*)

There is an excellent fragment of St. Polycarp, preserved by Victor Capuanus, and cited by Feuarentius, in his notes on the third book of Irenæus, where he gives a good account of the design each of the Evangelists had in writing his gospel; in the course of which he advanced some things extremely favourable to my present inquiry:—"Matthew," says this holy martyr, "writing to the Hebrews, has inserted the genealogy of Christ, that he might shew Christ to be descended of that race, whence all the Prophets had foretold he was to be born. But John, who was fixed at Ephesus, where the law was not known by the Gentiles, began his Gospel with the cause of our redemption; which cause was manifest from this, that God willed his Son to be incarnate for our salvation. But Luke begins with the priesthood of Zacharias, that, by the miracle of his Son's nativity, and the office of so great a preacher, he might make known the Divinity of Christ. And Mark, therefore, sets forth some ancient passages of prophetic mystery, agreeing to the coming of Christ, that his preaching might not seem a novelty, but be conformable to what had been anciently delivered."—(*Lib. 3, c. 3.*) In the circular Epistle of the Church of Smyrna, concerning the martyrdom of this holy man, we have the following testimonies to the truths now under consideration:—"Eighty-and-six years have I now served Christ, and he had never done me the least wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour."—(*Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, Sect. 9.*) When he was at the stake he made a prayer to Almighty God. which he finished in these words:—"For this, and for all things else, I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, by the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son; with whom to thee and the Holy Ghost, be glory both now and to all succeeding ages. Amen."—(*Ibid. Sect. 14.*) The Governor prevented the Christians from having the body, lest, says he, forsaking him that was crucified, they should begin to worship this Polycarp, and this was said at the instance of the Jews, who also watched us, say the

authors of this relation, that we should not take him out of the fire ; not considering, say they, that neither is it possible for us ever to forsake Christ, or worship any other besides Him. For Him, indeed, as being the Son of God, we do adore. But for the martyrs, we worthily love them as the Disciples and followers of our Lord, and upon the account of their exceeding great affection towards their Master and their King.—(Ibid. *Sect.* 17.)

“ God who is able to bring all of us by his grace and help to his eternal kingdom, through his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, to whom be glory, and honour, and power, and Majesty, for ever and ever. Amen.”—(Ibid. *Sect.* 20.)

“ But our Saviour Christ reigning for ever more ; to him be honour, glory, majesty, and an eternal throne, from generation to generation. Amen.”—(Ibid. *Sect.* 21.)

“ Jesus Christ ; with whom, glory be to God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, for the salvation of his chosen Saints.”—(Ibid. *Sect.* 22.)

“ That Jesus Christ our Lord may also gather me together with his elect ; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”—(Ibid., *Advert. to the Relation.* This doxology probably belongs to the latter end of the second, or beginning of the third century ; but, as it is annexed to this relation, I have introduced it here.)

These seven witnesses—viz., Barnabas, Hermas, Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, all lived in the first century, which is usually called the Apostolic age. The five first, most of whom sealed the truth with their blood, and had every possible opportunity of being acquainted with the great truths of the Gospel. The believers who wrote the two Relations concerning the martyrdoms of Ignatius and Polycarp, seem likewise to have been so favourably circumstanced that they could not be ignorant of the doctrine and practices of the first age. All these opinions, therefore, delivered by these seven witnesses, will bid fair for being the true ones, and conformable to those of the Apostles, by whom they had been instructed, and from whom they had received them. The celebrated Brucker says, when speaking of these Apostolic Fathers, “ The object of their most praise-worthy endeavours was, to follow the example of their masters, and exhibit the truth of the Gospel in such plainness of instruction, that even the weak and children might be led to a knowledge of them ; thinking that they had then sufficiently discharged the office of teacher, when without artificial aids of human erudition, or any mixture of philosophical conceits, they had boldly and openly, in their speeches and writings, held forth to the consideration of all men, even the most illiterate, the author of all Salvation, and the means by which the possession of it was to be secured. Of this we have a singular and shining example in the genuine Epistles of Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, and Polycarp, who were Disciples of the Apostles, and who, combining

the simplicity of Evangelic doctrine, with the sublimity of Divine truth, have displayed them in a style worthy of men distinguished by the name of Apostolic."—(*Hist. Crit. Phil.* v. 3, p. 270.)—Dr. Jortin writes,—“If the opinion of Christ’s Divinity had not commonly prevailed among the Christians of the first and second centuries, how came it to pass, that Adrian is said to have designed to deify Jesus Christ; or that Severus Alexander intended it?”—(*Remarks on Eccl. Hist.*, vol. 2, p. 90.)

It is well said by Clemens Romanus, “Look, brethren, into the Holy Scriptures, which are the true words of the Holy Ghost. You know that there is nothing unjust and counterfeit written in them.”—(*Epist. ad Corinth. Sect. 45.*)

The learned Selden assures us, that—“by the Son of God the Jews meant, the Word of God, as He is called in the Chaldee Paraphrast, which was all as one as to profess himself God.”—(*De Jure Nat. et Gent.* l. 2, c. 12.)

NOTE XVI.

I have received a letter, signed Catholicus, in which the writer very politely requests me to inform him, if the Jewish Church were Unitarian or not; to which I reply, most certainly not. And I beg to refer him to a celebrated work, entitled, “The Judgment of the Jewish Church against Unitarians, in the Controversy upon the Trinity and the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour.” By a Clergyman of the Church of England.—(*Allix.*)

“In a word,” says Dr. Allix, “this notion of a Plurality and a Trinity, expressed in the writings of Moses and the Prophets, has not only been observed by the Jews, but they have found out and acknowledged it, as well as the Christians, to be a great and profound mystery; and for the explaining of it, the Jews have employed very near the same ideas that the Christians use, in speaking of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. For they conceive in God, Faces and Subsistences, which we call Persons, as one may see in Sephor Zetzirah.”—(*Allix’s Judgment*, p. 171.) The perusal of this very learned work will afford infinite pleasure and instruction to all Theological Students, and I accordingly refer “Catholicus” to it.

NOTE XVII.

I am asked by the Marquis de Salaire, if it be possible to believe that the Almighty would permit true religion to be shut up in mysteries and incomprehensible dogmas? To which I answer, that one moment of reflection will suffice to shew the folly of such a question—are not all human sciences, physics in all its parts, natural history, metaphysics, and geometry itself, full of mysteries, still I am asked if it be possible that we are to find mysteries

in religion, which is the science of God? Is not man a mystery to himself? Can we comprehend even the nature of our own soul? how the body and soul are united? the formation of our ideas and sentiments; or the principle which animates us?—and still we wish that religion, which connects us with the great author of nature, with his attributes, with his eternal counsels, should teach nothing but what can be comprehended.

Such a manner of arguing is quite unworthy the talents of the Marquis de Salaire; as to what he says in regard to the Eucharist, I reply in the words of St. Leo the Great,—“What have we lost by the envy of the Devil, or by the sin of the first man? The right of being perfectly happy in heaven, to be like to the angels, to have a body adorned with all glorious qualities; but do we not receive something more by the goodness of our Saviour, united to Jesus Christ? Yes, we become one body with him by the Eucharist; we have a right to be raised above the angels, and placed at the right hand of the Most High; we shall, therefore, one day participate in the glory of Jesus Christ, by means of the Eucharist.” Thus, to speak the language of tradition, the Divinity of the Father resides in the person of the Son by eternal generation; the Son dwells substantially and personally in the body of Jesus by the incarnation. The deified body of Jesus Christ resides in us by the Eucharist. Admirable golden chain which unites the earth to the heavens; all spring from Adam; we are all reborn of Christ. Thus, humanity is united to the Divinity. My body is united to Jesus Christ by the Eucharist, the body of Jesus Christ is united to the body of my brother; the bodies of my brother and mine are, then, corporeally united by means of the body of Jesus Christ. Here we behold all that religion consists of, because religion is the union of God, of man, and of the universe; and this union resides all and entire in the Divine mystery of the Eucharist. Thus the Eucharist is the consummation of the new law—the mosaic law was but a figure of it; and all religions bear in some manner or other an image of it. The illustrious Bishop of Meaux, commenting on these words of St. Paul, “*Erunt duo in carne una*,” adds, “The effect of the Eucharist is to incorporate us with Jesus Christ, to be perfectly united to him in body and in soul; by the consummation of this chaste marriage, we are not only of his bone and of his flesh as a faithful spouse, but likewise of his spirit, *ensorte qu’il jouit de notre corps, de notre esprit et de notre cœur comme nous jouissons du sien*.”

NOTE XVIII.

ON THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

I have received Lady B.’s very kind letter, in which she requests of me to furnish her, for a friend, with a concise argument to prove the existence of God, and which I have great pleasure in doing.

First. Some being has existed from all eternity. Secondly. No being whose essence is to form incessantly various combinations, with a necessary dependence the one on the other, can be conceived without commencement ; from these we cannot but draw these two rigorous conclusions.

First. That the material and visible world has not existed from all eternity, since it is of its essence, to form without ceasing, successions of combinations depending one upon the other.

Secondly. That that which has existed from all eternity is a Being, having necessarily his cause in himself, since no Being could have lived anterior to Him, to give Him existence, and that he is a Being not susceptible of various combinations.

Also, a being all powerful, immutable, eternal, not only from all time, but for ever ; seeing that, existing by himself, he could not have priorly existed, and he being immutable, that is to say, not subject to vicissitude or change, has been, and will ever be, for all eternity.

A Being who is alone the eternal and sufficient Being, and who only has pre-existed before all time, is also the first and efficient cause, that is to say, the creator and absolute master of all that exists ; to whom all his creatures, and, above all, those whom he has endowed with an intelligence capable of knowing Him, owe not only a filial love for the gift of existence, but a gratitude without limit for that of intelligence, for all the advantages which they can possess, and for those to which he has pleased them to aspire ; and who deserves an absolute adoration by reason of his infinite perfections, perfections which cannot be placed in doubt, when we reflect that everything which he has set forth in his diversified works, emanate from him, as well as even the conception which we form to ourselves of that all perfection ;—God for evermore.

It is evident that the perfect, and above all, direct comprehension of the attributes of God cannot belong fully to intelligences, so inferior relatively to his Supreme Majesty as ours ; but that, finding ourselves forced to recognize his existence, because that its negation would imply some invincible contradiction, it remains to say that we acknowledge him in order to adore him, and pray him to enlighten us more, in order to worship him so much the more when we shall know better how adorable he is.

Once convinced of the existence of God, and of his perfections inseparable and necessary attributes of Him who is, how can Reason place it in doubt that the supreme wisdom has had an end in creating the universe, and in giving man intelligence ? The fact of the creation establishes an affinity between the Creator and his intelligent creature, and requires the duties, or in other terms, a religious worship of Him by man.

It is essential for the interest and the happiness of man, to study and to know these duties in order to fulfil them, and since this is essential to his

happiness, his Creator has designed him some means in order that they may arrive in a certain manner to this knowledge, when he shall make the search with an entire sincerity of heart.

Studying then, without ceasing, the proofs of Christianity in its facts, in its affinity and connection with the revelation of Moses and the primitive annals of the human race, in the purity and super-human perfection of its morality, and in the history and irrefragable certitude of the resurrection of Jesus Christ by his own power, after his undoubted human death, which establishes incontrovertibly his Divinity, and thence the infallibility of his word; acknowledging, by the perusal of the Gospel, that he who could not fail, has given to his teaching Church a Mission which can never be interrupted during the continuance of ages, let us hope that the sincerely incredulous who after having experienced the unhappiness of their blindness to the existence of God, shall have had their eyes opened on this subject, by the meditation of the absurd contradictions which arise from its negation, will very soon arrive at the Catholic truth. He may aid himself when he shall have want, of the numerous demonstrations of Catholic and even Protestant apologists, and study with a sincere desire of submitting himself to the truth, and with a continual recourse to the assistance and to the succour of the true eternal, whom he labours to know for the purpose of serving him as he wishes to be served.

NOTE XIX.

I answer the Hon. Mrs. S.'s question as follows:—that "The Greek version, called the Septuagint, and the Latin vulgate of the Old Testament, were both made from the Hebrew at times when this text was pure; accordingly, the former is constantly quoted by the Evangelists and St. Paul; and the latter, together with the New Testament, has been religiously preserved from error by the care and constant use of the Latin Church, since the time of the Apostles. But the Hebrew text having been almost entirely confined to the Jews for more than a thousand years, was in a very faulty state when Protestants began to translate it in the sixteenth century. This is acknowledged by Dr. Brett, Dr. Kennicott, and the learned in general."—(*Bishop Milner's Vindication of the End of Religious Controversy*, p. 13.)

NOTE XX.

I have received the letter which the Rev. G. H. Telson left at my Publisher's for me, which contains the most gross unfounded calumnies against the Catholic and Apostolic Church, and I reply to it as follows. That during

eighteen centuries, unbelievers have not ceased to heap objection on objection against her; they asserted, they reasoned, they argued, and they declaimed against her. To all their difficulties she opposed the word of that God who established her; and outliving all her discomfited enemies, she has for these eighteen hundred years pursued her triumphant career. She is not, therefore, without sufficient proof of her truth, having constantly been, for so long a time, and, notwithstanding the continual attacks made upon her, still being believed and followed by so many millions of men, and her spiritual dominion having extended from one end of the earth to the other.

I shall now conclude this note by putting in my turn these questions to the Rev. G. H. Telford: Whether he be infallibly certain, for example, that the Body and Blood of Christ are not present under the appearances of Bread and Wine? that there is no Purgatory? that it is unlawful to request the intercession of Saints, &c.? whether he dare to stake his salvation upon the negative assertion, or dare not be positive in his answer, as neither having certain revelation nor demonstration to the contrary? His reply, I know well, will be, "I may err, I may be mistaken, but I have reason to think there is none."

I here declare in the face of an enlightened public, and I feel sure they will agree with me, that it would be downright insanity for such a man to run the hazard of eternal damnation upon no better grounds than I think so, or my judgment tells me so; or for others blindly to follow such fallible guides, against such clear, universal, and constant testimonies, and the unerring authority of the Catholic Church. Lastly, these things considered, how much does it behove my readers, who are desirous to save their souls, to seek information on all these points, and to offer daily this or the like prayer to God, "that he dart a ray of divine light into their souls, and by the infusion of his grace, free them from error and ignorance," which are the effects of sin.

NOTE XXI.

Luke i., v. 16. "And he (John) shall convert many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God."

The Jews were never more rigid in adoring most scrupulously one only God, the Creator and Lord of all things, than they were at the coming of Jesus Christ upon the earth. The Lord God to whom John had converted many of the children of Israel, could then be no other but Jesus Christ; and again, for it is written—"And he shall go before him (the Lord God)," that is to say, he will be his Precursor. Now, permit me here to ask who was John the Precursor of, if not of Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ, consequently, is not a different person from the Lord God, and this reply is unanswerable. As to

the remark of W. G. in regard to the 38th verse of the 10th chapter of the Acts to the Apostles,—“For God was with him,” I reply to it as follows—God was with him in this sense, that he was united to him in the unity of person. This explanation was given because Nestorius abused this text and others with it, in order to shew that there were two persons in Christ—viz., the person of God which was Jesus Christ, and the person of Jesus Christ with whom God was. It is true that the personal union is not expressed in this text, but, take notice, it is not contradicted, and that suffices for the other texts which express it, and, consequently, preserve their full force. This dogma of Catholic Faith is the consequence of many united texts, all declaring this great dogma; he who separates them has but a part of the truth; and if he denies the surplus, he is totally in error.

NOTE XXII.

I have demonstratively proved in this work, that the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour was taught from the time of our Saviour's Ascension, to the year 67, by St. Paul and by St. John, as I have shewn when I have quoted the various proofs of the Divinity of Christ from their writings; the latter Apostle (St. John) continued to teach it after the death of St. Paul till the year 100; from the year 67 to 107, by St. Ignatius of Antioch; from 80 to 166, by St. Polycarp of Smyrna; at Rome, by Justin Martyr, from 140 to 166; from the time of St. Polycarp till the year 202, by St. Irenæus at Lyons; and about the year 200, Pope Victor excommunicated Theodotus the Tanner for denying the Divinity of Christ. From 190 to 202, by St. Clement of Alexandria, and by Tertullian; from 203 till 254, by Origen; from 248 to 258 by St. Cyprian of Carthage in Africa; in 260 it was declared to be the Faith of the Church by Sappiricius, who at first boldly professed it, but to save his life apostatized on the scaffold when he was just going to receive the crown of martyrdom; from 240 to 265 by St. Gregory of Neocesarea; from 250 to 265, by St. Dionysius of Alexandria; and in 270, by the Fathers of the first and second Councils of Antioch, in the latter of which, Paul of Samosata, alias Paul of Antioch, was deposed for denying the Divinity of Christ; in or about the year 297, by Arnobius; in the year 303, it was professed by St. Victor at Marseilles; by St. Afra at Augsburg in 304; and in 306, by St. Phileas of Thmuis; in the year 319, by St. Alexander of Alexandria, who opposed Arius; and in 325, by the Fathers in the General Council of Nice. By this it appears that these Doctrines were taught constantly and uninterruptedly from the beginning of Christianity till the Council of Nice, in which the same Doctrine was maintained, and the Son declared to be consubstantial with the Father.

APR 15 1915

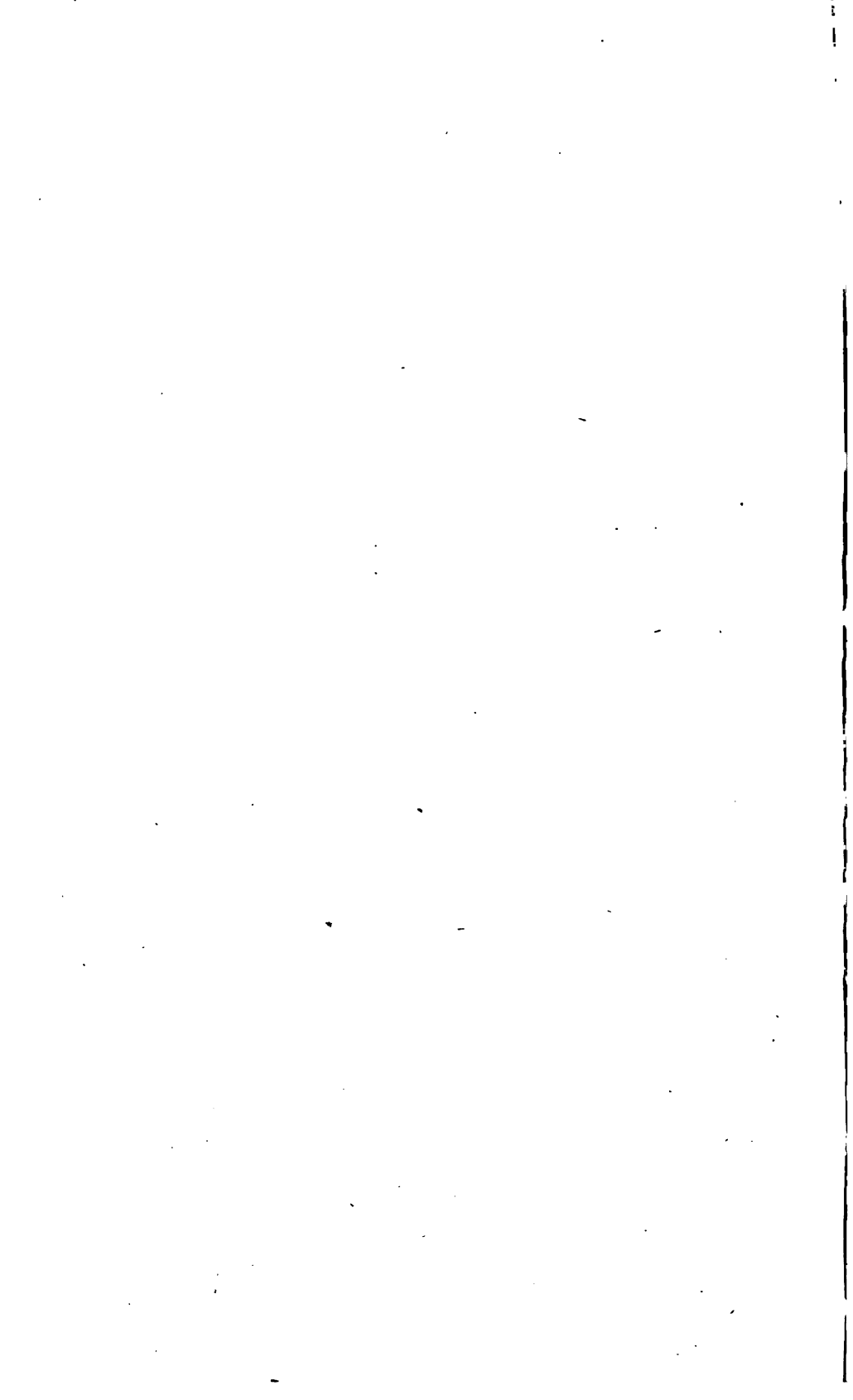
FOLLOWING the holy example of a most learned Catholic Divine, I most respectfully submit, and with all the simplicity of a true child of the Church, every syllable I have written in this publication, to the supreme judgment of the Apostolic See. Whatever that first Mistress of all Churches approves, I approve; whatever it rejects, I reject; and whatever it condemns, I condemn. For I am not so ignorant of my own nature, as not to be fully conscious of my being but a weak man, liable to error and to mistake. *Homo sum, nil humani a me alienum esse puto.* With heart and soul I adhere to the solemn declaration of St. Jerome, in his epistle to St. Damasus Pope, "It is with thy Holiness I hold it; that is to say, I live in communion with the Chair of Peter. Upon that rock I know the Church has been built."—*(Epist. xiv. ad Damasum.)*

VERAX,
A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

- Page 3, line 3 from bot. *for not read nor.*
 3, line 2 from bot. *for in read of.*
 4, line 15 from bot. *read but we shall.*
 5, line 12 from bot. *for in read on.*
 9, line 2 from bot. *for rise read raise.*
 13, line 17 from top, *dele are.*
 13, bottom line, *for Elhoim read Elohim.*
 34, top line, *for Deity read Divinity.*
 38, line 5 from top, *for good read unshaken.*
 44, line 12 from top, *for ravished read raised.*
 46, line 1 of contents, *for Deity read Divinity.*
 46, line 5 from bot. *for Deity read Divinity.*
 47, bottom line, *for up read upon.*
 53, line 3 from top, *for want read warrant.*
 53, line 16 from bot. *for of read for.*
 61, line 9 from bot. *for shuts up read closes.*
 66, line 4 from top, *dele by.*
 67, line 13 from top, *for believes read believed.*
 70, line 6 from bot. *for These read The.*
 77, lines 12 and 15 from top, *for would read could.*
 81, line 8 from top, *for call read called.*
 81, line 9 from bot. *for Calvinistic read Calvinistic.*
 82, line 13 from top, *for He took bread read He took the bread.*
 87, line 12 from bot. *for principles read principle, and for he is a creature read he is but a creature.*
 90, line 14 from bot. *for are the firstborn of absurdities read are in the first class of absurdities.*
 90, line 9 from bot. *for digest read fall into.*
 92, line 13 from bot. *for we read ye.*
 96, line 18 from top, *for who read which.*
 98, line 2 from top, *for Esaias read Isaia.*
 98, line 6 from top, *for Esaias read Isaia.*
 98, line 6 from bot. *for in his eye read had in view.*
 99, line 10 from bot. *for sin read sins.*
 99, line 8 from bot. *for a mere creature read as a mere creature.*
 104, line 8 from bot. *for of atonement read of the atonement.*
 105, line 14 from bot. *for least read last.*
 106, line 6 from top, *for in read to.*
 106, line 16 from bot. *for being incarnate read a being incarnate.*
 107, line 16 from bot. *for to read would.*
 107, line 15 from bot. *for are read were.*
 107, bottom line, *for but in his read but that in his.*
 111, line 9 from top, *for shall Messiah read shall the Messiah.*
 112, line 9 from bot. *for knowledge read knowledge.*
 114, line 10 from top, *for Apostles foresaw read Apostles both fore-saw.*
 114, line 14 from bot. *for them read those.*
 115, line 2 from bot. *dele As.*
 116, line 9 from bot. *for hypothesis read hypotheses.*
 119, line 12 from top, *for therefore must be read consequently.*
 121, line 9 from top, *for Priestly read Priestley.*
 123, line 14 from top, *for If to the read If in the.*
 124, line 3 from top, *for and are read and we are.*
 126, line 12 from top, *for of Providence read of his Providence.*
 127, line 6 from bot. *for state read states.*



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